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The Lost Captain;

or,

Shipper Jabez Coffin's Cruise to the
Open Polar Sea.

BY CAPTAIN FRED. WHITTAKER,
AUTHOR OF "RED RAJAH," "THE IRISH CAPTAIN,"
"THE SEVERED HEAD," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT CAME OF A DAY'S FISHING.

"STEADY, Rube, steady, or he'll have ye overboard," cried Uncle Jabez. "Here he comes, the varmint! Geerewssalem! That's a ten-pounder!"

Reuben Macy did as he was told, for he had been brought up, sailor fashion, to obey orders. The boat was dashing along at racing speed before a rattling northerly breeze through the opening between Nantucket and Tuckanuck Islands, the best

blue-fish ground on the New England coast, right in the teeth of the flood tide, which was running like a mill-race. The seas came sweeping down toward them, great green walls, crested with white foam, and it seemed every moment as if one must come aboard; but the sharp cutwater surmounted them without an effort, and away went the little craft, mounting and descending the huge billows like a cork, while the white mainsail swelled above, and Uncle Jabez sat jammed up in the stern-sheets to windward, with his feet braced against a rib on the port side, as he hugged the tiller and kept the Lively Sally steady on her course. He had the wind on his starboard quarter, but the force of the opposing seas was so great, that it needed a careful hand and watchful eye to keep the Lively Sally from jibing without warning almost any minute.

Uncle Jabez, with his red face seamed into countless wrinkles, his fringe of gray whisker round the chin, his half-shut, bloodshot eyes peering from under shaggy brows, looked as if he was in his right place at that helm in just such a commotion. Jabez Coffin was a born and bred Nantucketer, a sailor to the backbone, and now that he had retired from the

quarter-deck and blue water, he never seemed so happy as when cleaving the green swells round his native island, teaching his nephews how to take the voracious fish that swim the blue Atlantic.

They were both in the boat with him to-day, Reuben and Jonathan Macy—the only relatives besides their mother that Jabez Coffin had possessed for forty years and more. He was an old bachelor, left an orphan in early manhood, with one little sister, twenty years younger than himself, who in due time had fallen in love with and married handsome Jonathan Macy, mate of the whaler in which Jabez had made his way to fortune, beginning as a foremast hand and ending as captain and owner of her and another craft.

But that was very nearly twenty years before our story commences, and the good ship Sarah Jane was lying idle at the wharf in the harbor, while the Pride of Nantucket, Jonathan Macy, Master, was now supposed to be somewhere up Davis's Straits, looking for seals and furs among the Esquimaux.

Since Jabez Coffin had retired from the seas, whaling had become a pursuit of the past, all of its profit having vanished with the coming of lard-oil and pe-



"NO, NO, CAPPEN. SHE WITCH—WITCH, I TELL YOU—COME IN STORM—GO IN STORM—SHE— HAYEE!!! STABBOARD!!"

treulum, and the keen old Nantucketer, had been one of the first to recognize the change and take to sealing instead of whaling for a livelihood.

While the Pride of Nantucket was away—over a year now—the two young Macys staid at home with their Uncle Jabez, their mother and one girl cousin, Kate Macy, a wild hoyden of seventeen, of whom we shall soon hear more. The boys were longing for the day when they would be able, like their father, to go to sea; and Uncle Jabez used to inflame their fancies with all sorts of sea-yarns, like the grim old salt that he was.

Jonathan Macy, the younger, was now a fine boy of nineteen, and his brother Reuben, who had just struck a blue-fish, was seventeen.

"Steady, Rube, steady!" again called out Uncle Jabez, warningly, as the lad showed symptoms of great excitement, for it was his first blue-fish.

"Haul him in, and don't let your line slack a bit, or he'll unhook himself, *sure*. There he jumps!"

Rube kept a steady haul on the line as he was bid, and out of the water leaped a blue-fish, about sixty feet from the boat, shaking his head savagely, as if determined to unhook himself.

"Haul him in hard, *Rube*," cried Jonathan from the other side of the boat. He had not got a bite yet, and the waves were tossing the Lively Sally up and down in such a way that the lines were constantly slackening.

Steadily Rube hauled, though the line almost cut through his mittens, and at last the fish was pulled in, fighting hard all the time. Then his brother came to his help, and both boys, with one good swing, landed the blue-fish in the bottom of the boat, where he unhooked himself in a moment with a last savage jump.

"Back to your line, Jon'than. Yonder's a *slick*!" shouted Uncle Jabez, excitedly at this moment, and Jonathan jumped, for he had been out in the opening before, and knew what a "slick" meant.

The two boys, looking ahead, saw that they were nearly through the narrow strait between the two islands, and that the curling white-capped waves were growing larger, showing that they were entering deeper water. Right in the midst of the tossing confusion was a smooth oily patch of water, and the Lively Sally was heading straight for this patch.

Jonathan knew well enough what it was—a blue-fish "slick." He had seen such before—sure signs of a large school of these voracious but delicately flavored fishes. The blue-fish, when in large crowds, are in the habit of exuding a sort of oil which calms the water for some little distance around the school, so that the fish can see their prey—mossbunkers, eels and shiners—more clearly.

Right into the slick steered the Lively Sally, and in another moment both boys were fast to a pair of ten-pounders, while the "skittering lines" on the outriggers, with their shining squids jumping over the waves, were seized by another pair; so there was the Lively Sally, with four fish hooked, and only two boys to pull them in, if they could.

Both the young Macys had heavy woolen mittens, the best things for handling their slippery lines, and both hauled in for dear life. Jonathan brought his prize on board first, and then turned his attention to the skittering line on his side, which had a check cord from the boat to draw it in without disturbing the outrigger. He pulled with all his might, for, though he was a strong young fellow, six foot high, he had hooked a twenty-pound fish this time, and a twenty-pound blue-fish can fight like a tiger. By the time he had it on board, the Lively Sally had run nearly a mile out to sea, and then he turned to help his companion.

Reuben was much smaller and slighter than his elder brother and had much harder work. He had not got in his fish yet, though it was close to the boat, shaking its head as viciously as ever. As Jonathan came to help him, Reuben gave a last effort and swung his prey—as he thought—into the boat.

Alas for the vanity of human hopes and green fishermen! The blue-fish struck the gunwale instead of the inside of the boat, and Reuben had the mortification of seeing his prize, with one last shake, rid itself of the hook and vanish in the green waters.

He was ready to cry with his disappointment, for he was a delicate boy, something spoiled as the youngest of the family, but Uncle Jabez comforted him with the remark:

"Never mind, Rube. They often do that. A pesky hard fish to get aboard is them blue-fish. Haul in the other and look out for him. Help him, Jon'than."

The two boys, thus encouraged, hauled in on the check line with little difficulty, for the fish was pretty well tired out after its rapid mile run, dragged by the nose, and was nearly drowned besides. In it came with a rapid pull, and was almost up to the boat, when another fish—a perfect monster to the eyes of Reuben—darted through the waves close to the quarter of the Lively Sally, and swallowed blue-fish, bait, line and all, in a moment!

Then came a sudden lurch of the boat, both boys nearly overboard, and Uncle Jabez roared out:

"Let go! Let go the outrigger! It's a *hoss-mackerel*!"

But, before either could obey, came a snap and twang as the line parted, and both boys fell over backward into the bottom of the boat, while the horse-mackerel darted away rejoicing.

"Waal, boys," said Uncle Jabez with a sort of rueful grin, as they picked themselves up, "this sort of thing is what they call fisherman's luck, and blamed hard luck at that. Ef your father was only aboard, I'd be even with that critter, for never did I see a straighter dart than Jon'than's: but 'tain't no use."

"Let me try the harpoon, uncle," interrupted

Jonathan eagerly. "Please let me try it. I've struck porpoises before this, and we can take that fellow home to mother, if you'll let me."

Uncle Jabez shook his head doubtfully.

"Ye don't know what a boss-mackerel is, boy. They goes up to two thousand pound, sometimes. If you *cud* strike that feller—and mind I ain't sayin' you could—he'd give us a tow out, mebbe a matter of five miles, and—Gee-rewsalem! Ef he ain't there again, the varmint."

Sure enough, the huge fish, in shape and manners almost the portrait of the blue-fish they were after, but measuring seven or eight feet in length, leaped from the water near the boat and was seen to dart ahead of them, straight toward a second slick, which they were approaching.

Uncle Jabez eyed him critically and then nodded his head to Jonathan, saying:

"You kin try him, boy, ef you want. He ain't over six hundred."

In a moment Jonathan had darted to the bow of the Lively Sally, and was hauling out from under the half-deck the harpoon and line that always lay there. The little craft was cat-rigged, and her deck ran aft to the usual cockpit with a high combing round it and water-tight lockers behind the seats, so that there was hardly a possibility of the boat's sinking in any sort of sea, unless the bottom was stove in by some accident. In a very few minutes, young Jonathan had the strong harpoon-line, a hundred fathoms long, out with its reel in place at the extreme bow, in the step prepared for its reception, and stood ready with his harpoon poised, by which time they were almost on top of the slick.

Reuben, forgetting all about blue-fish in the greater excitement, had abandoned his lines and followed his brother, so that three shining squids were still trailing and skittering along in the water behind the Lively Sally, entirely unheeded. Right through the slick swept the boat with a hissing gurgle, as the keen cutwater cleaved the waves, but not a bite came on the lines. Jonathan stood on the bow peering down into the water, but not a fish could be seen.

"The big varmint's skeered 'em all off," observed Uncle Jabez as they drew out of the calm water of the slick. "P'raps he's huntin' the school down. Look sharp, Jon'than!"

"I see him—no, it's another—there's another still—a *school*!" exclaimed the young harpooner, in low tones of extreme excitement, as he stood with one hand braced against the mast and supporting the coil of line, while the other held his harpoon. "Get the lance, Rube! Quick!"

"Keerful, boy, keerful!" cried Uncle Jabez, warningly, as he saw Jonathan abandon his hold of the mast and poise his harpoon over his head.

But Jonathan was too intent on his prey to hear the caution. With a swing of the body he sent his weapon back to the length of his arm and then darted it forward into the waves. One keen glance down, an exclamation of triumph, and then he sprung to the mast again and set his foot on the whizzing reel. Hardly had he done so, when the boat received a great shock and Uncle Jabez cried out:

"Let him have the line, all there is, or he'll have ye overboard!"

And indeed it seemed likely that Jonathan would be overboard anyway. Big, athletic young man that he was, the huge fish he had struck took the whirling reel from under his foot in a moment, and he had to cling to the mast to avoid toppling over into the sea. In less than a minute the hundred fathoms were all out and nothing was left but the reel stand, a strong iron bar, let into a hole in the stem, calculated for just such strains.

The occupants of the boat were sensible of the end of the line being reached by the shock to the Lively Sally and her immediate increase of velocity. She was going free, with a spanking breeze on her starboard quarter, but now she seemed fairly to fly through the water, while her sail began to flatten in a way that showed she was almost in advance of the wind.

Uncle Jabez, cool as a cucumber, saw this, and called out to the young harpooner:

"Come in, Jon'than, and let go the halyards. Give the varmint somethin' to drag."

Jonathan understood the hint, and immediately stooped down to the cleats at the foot of the mast, let go peak and throat halyards, and jumped back into the waist to draw in the fluttering canvas, while Uncle Jabez jibed the boom over amidships by a turn of the helm till the sail was safely secured.

Then they became sensible that they were being towed along by a monster fish of some kind, so that the seas swept aft to the hatch combing every instant, and would have come aboard but for the extreme buoyancy of the Lively Sally.

There was nothing to do but to sit down in the cockpit, dipper in hand, ready to bail out, while the fish exhausted itself, and Uncle Jabez assisted the process of fatiguing their prey by steering from one side to the other, to offer as much resistance as possible.

"How big was the feller you struck, and how did you strike him, Jonathan?" asked the old sailor in one of these struggles. "He feels like a whopper."

"Well, uncle, I don't want to brag, but I should say he was about as long as our boat," was the quiet reply. "I caught him in the side just over the sound-bladder, but I guess I didn't send it in deep enough, or he wouldn't pull like this."

Uncle Jabez put on a serious expression of face as he said:

"J. e-rewsalem! boy, ef so he's as long as this boat, he must be a two-thousand-pounder, and he'll lead us a chase."

CHAPTER II.

WHAT THE FISHERMEN FOUND.

WHEN Uncle Jabez delivered his opinion on the size of the fish, Jonathan looked serious; but Reuben, who was full of excitement, exclaimed:

"Won't that be splendid? Why, we can feed half Nantucket!"

Uncle Jabez screwed up his wrinkled face in a curious grin.

"P'raps—if we get him aboard—but he ain't here yet," was his only reply.

"Oh, but they've taken just as big ones in Gaspé Bay, uncle," was the quick reply. "I was reading about them in Scott's American Fishes only yesterday, and he says that they take them of all sizes."

Uncle Jabez made no reply. Like most men who have risen from the ranks by practical experience, he had very little faith in books in matters of which he knew anything, though he had a great respect for "Farnin," as he called it, in the abstract. Reuben, the youngest and favorite son of his sister, Sally Macy, had always been fond of books, and had enjoyed a much better education than his elder brother on that very account. When he was six he could read better than Jonathan, who was then eight, and by the time the boys were twelve and fourteen respectively. Jonathan was so disgusted with school life that he begged to be allowed to ship in a coaster and earn his living, so that Reuben could be sent to High School and College as the "smart one" of the family.

The consequence was that now, when Jonathan was nineteen, he was a first-class seaman, strong and active, but knowing very little of books, while Reuben was a slender, pale-faced boy with a big head, an enthusiastic reader, and quite a skillful amateur in various branches of science taught at Harvard, from which college he was now absent on vacation.

The two boys were the antipodes of each other in habits; one all theory, the other all practice; but they were united by a strong band of love: for, while Jonathan rather looked down on Reuben in practical matters, he fairly adored the other's stores of learning, while slender Reuben displayed equal pride in his brother's physical prowess.

But while we have been telling the internal affairs of the Macy family, the great horse-mackerel has been taking the Lively Sally out to sea, and by the time the speed of the monster began to slacken, the white sands of Nantucket were almost out of sight, while the sea was rapidly changing from green to dark blue.

"Now, boys," observed Uncle Jabez, who had been keenly watching the line slapping into the waves ahead of them, "she don't drag under any more. That feller's weakenin'. Guess we'd better haul up and lance him. Rube, kin you help your brother?"

"I think so, sir," was the reply in rather an offended tone, for Uncle Jabez had a way of treating Reuben in the light of a baby that was somewhat exasperating to the boy.

"Waal, let's see what ye kin do. You reel, while Jon'than hauls; and stand ready to hand your brother the lance when he gits nigh enough."

"Ay, ay, sir" was Rube's response in sailor fashion, at which the old man smiled, as usual when his nephew put on nautical airs.

Now the bows of the Lively Sally began to rise from the strain to which they had before been subjected, and presently they became aware that the line was slackening and the boat drifting on the waves; while the breeze, which had been quite strong over the shallow water, had died away almost into a calm. As soon as this happened, Uncle Jabez, after a keen squint all round the sky, looking for clouds indicating squalls, left the tiller and joined his nephews in the task of hauling up to the big fish. Two hands at the line made quick pulling, till their prey, feeling the smart of the harpoon under the renewed strain, gave another rush forward, leaped out of the water not two hundred feet from the boat with a mad fling, and revealed to their eyes a monster of his breed, "the biggest horse-mackerel I ever see'd," as Uncle Jabez declared.

No sooner was the leap over than the line slackened and Uncle Jabez hauled in with all his might, crying:

"Here he comes, boys, tryin' another game. Reel in, Rube! Don't let that line kink if you valy our lives. Lance! Lance!"

Reuben sent the reel whizzing round as fast as he was able, using up the line as it came in, and shoved the lance out on the bow of the boat beside his uncle at the same time.

In a very few moments they could see the great fish heading straight for the boat with open mouth, and Uncle Jabez caught up the lance.

It was composed of a blade nearly three feet long, shaped like a bay leaf, both edges as keen as razors, the staff about six feet long, with a line and cork float attached. The great horse-mackerel came tearing up to the boat as if to devour it whole, but swerved aside, frightened, as it came nearer.

"Haul in hard, Jon'than," muttered the old man in excited tones, as he grasped one of the stays and leaned over the side in his eagerness.

Jonathan obeyed with all his power, taking a turn of the line round one of the halyard cleats to give himself an advantage, and then the fight began.

The great fish pulled and leaped, but was not strong enough to stand the pain any longer, as the line drew the barbed harpoon, flesh and all, toward the boat.

At every fresh jump the line slackened, and Jonathan hauled in the slack promptly, securing it by the cleat and his foot. At last the fish was close beside the boat and began to flap its huge tail against the gunwale with a sound like thunder, when Uncle Jabez plunged the lance into its gills, burying it up to the shaft.

Seizing the line before the boat could follow it overboard, the old man hauled out the keen weapon, which offered no resistance, and out flew a torrent of blood from the fish, dyeing the sea crimson.

Again and again did Uncle Jabez lance the great horse-mackerel in the gills, and at each thrust its struggles became fainter, till at last it lay on the water, belly up, and the old sailor pronounced it dead.

"And the next question is, boys, how shall we git the critter to hum, for we can't haul him aboard, now how? 'Twould cant the boat over, so she'd fill and go down."

"Why not cut it up and leave the head and tail and all but the meat here?" asked Reuben, a little timidly, for he was afraid of his uncle's obvious contempt of his voice in all fishing matters.

Uncle Jabez favored him with a nod of approval this time.

"The books hain't sp'iled ye, arter all, Rube. That's jest what we'll do with the varmint. Mighty good meat in him, too, I tell ye. Git a line round his head, Jon'than, and I'll make his tail fast. If we don't have a good twelve hundred o' fresh fish for your ma to-night I'm a lubber."

In five minutes they had the fish secured alongside of the now motionless Lively Sally, and lay rocking idly on the ground swell, the wind having sunk to a mere catspaw. Overhead the sky was pale blue, with not a cloud to dim the expanse, and Reuben inquired:

"How shall we get home with our fish to-night, uncle?" It looks as if the wind was all gone."

The old man cast a keen glance—the habitual weather look of a sailor—to the southward, and then observed:

"Don't you be skeered 'bout wind. We'll have all the wind we want to get home to-night; lucky if we don't git more'n we kin stand under, with sick a load."

Reuben made no more remarks; but he looked more narrowly at the sky than he had hitherto done and observed that while it was apparently quite clear, a second glance, roving over the blue, could detect some faint hazy threads, or stripes, in regular succession, terminating in a faint whitish bank on the southern horizon, and stretching across the heavens like the rounds of a great ladder. They were very faint, and seemed to disappear as you looked close at them; but as soon as the eye roved rapidly from the zenith down to the horizon it became sensible of these parallel stripes.

The boy said nothing about his observation, for he was silent and retiring, like most "bookish" young men, but he took occasion while they were cutting up the meat of the horse-mackerel, to look again and again at the sky, and every time he looked the stripes seemed to grow plainer.

They took the great carcass of the fish alongside with nooses of rope at head and tail, and then Uncle Jabez exercised his skill as an old whaler in removing the flesh from the skeleton.

"It'd be a sight handier ef we had a couple of blubber-spades," said the old man in a grumbling tone, "but I guess we'll have to make shift with the lance this time."

So saying, with deft and skillful cuts, that showed he knew the anatomy of his prize by previous experience, he detached the whole of the flesh of one side from the backbone and ribs to which it adhered, hauled it on board with the help of the boys, and cut it into slabs of manageable size as it came over the gunwale, till four hundred pounds of good solid brownish flesh lay on the floor of the cockpit and Uncle Jabez observed:

"There, boys, I guess that's all we kin get without we have some hooks a sight larger than any we've got here to turn the varmint over. T'other side 'll have to go to the sharks, I guess. Yon's one of 'em, waitin' now."

As he spoke he was leaning over the side, jabbing idly away at the remains of the carcass, when the keen lance slipped in between two of the ribs into the stomach of the horse-mackerel, and instantly they heard the unmistakable "clink" of steel on glass!

Uncle Jabez started with surprise. "Geerewsalement!" he exclaimed, "of the varmint hain't got a bottle in his insides, call me a lubber."

Reuben burst out eagerly:

"I know! It must be a bottle some poor fellow has thrown overboard with a letter inside and the fish has swallowed it. Get it quick, uncle, for here comes a shark!"

There was much excitement in the boat as the old sailor worked his keen lance to and fro, cut asunder the soft bones of the horse-mackerel, then thrust his bare arm into the hole he had made and pulled out a square junk-bottle, sealed up with a care that told of the errand on which it had been sent. Then the remains of the fish were cast loose and they could see the shark rushing eagerly after it into the depths of the sea, as it slowly disappeared in the clear waters.

"Histe the sail, Jon'than, for here comes the wind," observed Uncle Jabez as he went to the tiller. "You, Rube, you're the best scollar, so you kin read what's in the bottle; for ef I ain't mistook that's a paper in there."

As he spoke they felt the first gust of wind, and Reuben, looking up, saw that the faint stripes he had noticed half an hour before had crept up past the zenith, and were creeping across the sky, followed by others plainer and thicker, till the sun was becoming hidden behind a veil of gray. Every moment the gloom was increasing, and the wind came in chilly gusts from the north-east, sighing mournfully through the stays and round the masts of the Lively Sally. Jonathan set the sail, and the boat began to beat her way toward the land as Reuben opened the mysterious bottle.

Of course there was a paper in it. They had known

that as soon as they saw the care with which it was sealed up. A paper there was, evidently torn from a ship's log-book; and the blurred writing told of the haste with which it had been committed to the deep, probably in some moment of extreme peril.

But what made Reuben start and stare so at the faded character?

"What is it, Rube, what is it?" hurriedly asked Uncle Jabez, for that boy had turned as pale as death. A short cry told the tale.

"It's father's writing!"

A dead silence of dismay was broken by Uncle Jabez, who said in a husky voice:

"Read it, Rube. Let's hear the worst!"

In trembling tones the boy obeyed. The paper was small, for a few words suffice to give bad news. It ran thus:

"Whoever picks this paper up, I beg them, for God's sake, to take it to Captain Jabez Coffin, of Nantucket. The ship *Pride of Nantucket* was nipped by the ice, August 19th, 1873, in latitude 84 deg. 37 min. north, longitude from Greenwich 76 deg. 40 min. west, and is now sinking in Smith's Sound. We are taking to the boats. God have mercy on us all.

JONATHAN MACY, Master."

For several minutes no one spoke, and then Jonathan groaned out:

"My poor mother! What shall we do?"

Uncle Jabez compressed his lips in a determined way as he answered:

"Do? We've got to find him, boys, that's all about it! My poor little Sally!"

The last words broke out in spite of himself as the weather-beaten old salt hastily brushed the back of his hand across his eyes and turned away his head. To him the mother of these boys was still the "little Sally" of yore, his baby sister; and the thought of what this message would be to her was the hardest trial of all to him—greater far than the loss of the ship in which lay half his fortune.

Presently he turned to the boys, who both sat, pale and speechless, as if stunned, and observed, in a tone of ill-assumed cheerfulness:

"Don't be downhearted, boys. He mayn't be dead—arter all, I've knowed many—oh, my poor little Sally!"

Uncle Jabez fairly broke down and could say no more for some time, till the increasing wind and darkening sky turned his attention to their own safety, and the next hour was passed in a hard struggle with a stiff north-easter, that came down on them in torrents of rain and mist and cost them a fight to gain the harbor in safety.

During all this time Uncle Jabez said not a word, nor did his nephews, but all were thinking their hardest, and the result of the old man's cogitations revealed itself as they went up the wharf, weary and dripping. Captain Coffin laid his hand on Reuben's shoulder there and said:

"Listen awhile, boys; I've suthen to say to ye. I don't believe Jon'than's dead, but I do think he must have been in a bad fix when he writ that letter. Now, I want you to keep up your mother's spirits and jest remember this: *We're goin' to find him, alive or dead.* The Sarah Jane lies at the wharf, and, if need be, I'll spend every cent I've got left in the world to find Jon'than in that ship. The *Pride*'s gone, but Jon'than ain't, and we're goin' to find him. You hear me! Waal, then, put on your best faces and don't let your mother think there's any real danger, if you valley her life. Now come in!"

Then Uncle Jabez led the way to the house.

CHAPTER III.

KALATOONAH AND KABLUNET

Two months after the events recorded above, a small ship was plowing the waters of Baffin's Bay in the latter part of June. A heavy gale was blowing from the north-east, and the sky was covered with gray clouds, while a drizzling mist beat in the face of Jabez Coffin, walking the quarter-deck, covered up in his oilskin suit, with a flapping sou'easter tied under his chin. The sea was high and boisterous, and the dirty green color of the water showed that the vessel was near land, while the ugly weather had driven every one below except the helmsman and the watch on deck.

Presently, as Uncle Jabez turned in his uneasy walk on the slippery deck, a head rose from the cabin-hatch and out sprung a female figure with a gay laugh, coming sliding down the steep incline of the deck into the lee scuppers and bringing up against the bulwarks.

"What cheer, Uncle? How's her head? My don't it blow, just!" cried this new-comer, all in a breath, as she turned a pair of particularly saucy gray eyes on Captain Coffin.

It was evidently a girl, from the voice and the smooth face, but the dress was far more like that of a man and a sailor, for Katherine Macy—more commonly called Crazy Kit—was such a born boyden that she abhorred the slavery of long skirts, and continued, at seventeen, to wear a costume more common at the tender age of seven.

A round sailor-hat, a long pea-jacket coming nearly to the border of her short blue skirts, and tall India-rubber boots might have suited a child, but were out of place on most young women; and yet no one ever thought of commenting on Kitty Macy's dress as unsuited to her. She was so strong and lithe, so active and plucky, that every one said she ought to have been a boy, and as far as her own tastes went she was boy all over.

An orphan since the age of three, her father had been drowned in a wreck when within sight of his home at Nantucket, and her mother had died after the shock only a few days later, leaving tiny Kitty to

the care of her uncle, Jonathan Macy, who cared for her ever after.

The pet and plaything of the Macy family and old Uncle Jabez, as she always called him—though he was no relative—Kitty had grown up to be what the Nantucket folks called "smart as a steeltrap, but wild as a hawk." She had been the pride and torment of the school for her quickness at learning and her tricks on her neighbors, but she had learned all that Nantucket could teach her long ago, and had been running wild ever since.

All the advice and reproof in the world would not keep her off the water, where she was as much at home as any of her boy comrades; she could pilot a car or sail a boat as well as any sailor in Nantucket, and joined to these accomplishments that of swimming like a fish.

"Well, uncle," began Miss Hoyden, throwing back the curls that came blowing into her face—the most feminine thing about her—"where are we now?"

"Off Whalefish Islands, monkey," growled Uncle Jabez like a good-natured bear. "Where?"

Aunt Sally and the boys, Kitty?"

"Aunt Sally's asleep, and Rube's working; we at his tiresome old latitudes in the cabin, like a worm as he is. As for Jon'than, I left him get on his sea-boots to come on deck."

"Well, monkey, and how do you like coming to sea in real earnest?" asked the old sailor. "Tain as nice as you thought 'twas; is it?"

"Oh, I don't mind the bad weather," retorted Kitty; "but I do hate this drizzle and fog all the time. Ain't we ever going to see land, uncle?"

"If I ain't mighty mistaken we'll see somethin' on't pretty soon, my girl. The clouds are breaking over to windward, and we'll have a clear sky inside of an hour."

Just then a long quavering cry came from aloft where the look-out was stationed: the well-known cry of "LAND OH!!!"

Kitty Macy clapped her hands.

"Hooray for land! Where away?" She answered the half of the mast-head with her customary saucy independence, ignoring all nautical customs, and the answer came back:

"Broad away on the weather bow, miss."

Kitty Macy was a privileged character on board the Sarah Jane of Nantucket, for any one else would have been pretty severely snubbed for taking the captain's office from him; but nobody ever scolded Kitty.

Hardly were the words out of the look-out's mouth than away went miss up the main rigging, straining her eyes to get a glimpse of the land, for she knew that the look-out was above the fog and mist, which hung close over the sea.

But she did not go far. Before she reached the maintop, something attracted her attention on the sea below, looming out of the fog, and she stopped, screaming out:

"Oh, uncle, look, look! Here's a boat!"

Old Uncle Jabez hurried to the lee bulwarks where Kitty was pointing, and, sure enough, there was a boat of some kind, skimming up and down the great seas and coming toward the Sarah Jane.

Kitty hurried down the rigging just as her two cousins attracted by the noise on deck, came out of the cabin, and in a few minutes all the ship's company who were awake were crowded on the side of the ship, watching the approaching stranger.

Such a boat and such a boatman Kitty and her cousins had never seen before.

The craft in which he sat was a long slender canoe, completely decked over, and apparently made of the thinnest of parchment, so thin that as the wave washed over it, one might see the outlines of the man's legs and the skeleton of his boat through the transparent covering. Hard and stiff as so much horn, it skinned over the tops of the waves and cut through the foam on the crests with the ease of a sea-bird, while so close was the union between man and boat that it was difficult to tell where one began and the other ended.

The boatman sat in a little round hole in the middle of his flimsy craft, clothed in a jacket of sealskin which fitted tightly over a circular rim to the girding, while his sleeves were tight at the wrists and he wore a hood all round his face. In fact, he seemed boat and all to be perfectly water-tight, for he was over or under the tops of the waves with equal indifference, plowing a long double-bladed paddle, first on one side then on the other.

"Who is it, uncle; what is it?" asked Kitty, eagerly. "What is it, Jonathan, Reuben, any of you? What is that queer fish?"

"It's a *kayacker*," answered the old sailor, "an Esquimaux from Disco. I guess they've spied us from shore. If so, this feller's the pilot, and I ought to know him."

"Look, there's another," suddenly cried Reuben, pointing; and, sure enough, through the haze came skimming a second canoe, a trifle smaller than the first, and carrying a second figure, point for point like the other, save that the hood of this one rose to a peak at the top of the head, crowned with the tail of a fox.

"Here's his twin brother," laughed Jonathan, as this second kayak came skimming along, but Uncle Jabez gave a dry sniff as he said:

"That's all you know, youngster. That's a *gal*, though I never seen one in a kayak afore. Geerewsalement! If the critter ain't comin' aboard!"

The two kayacks looked like egg-shells, tossed about on the heavy sea, which was running nearly as high as the Sarah Jane's lower yards; but their managers seemed to be perfectly at home, whenever they came in sight on the crests of the waves. When they disappeared in the hollows one hardly expected to see them again, but presently the long, slim noses of the canoes poked themselves out, side

The Lost Captain.

By ziles in the foam on a wave crest, and on they move with a swift glide, more like the flight of a bird than the progress of a boat.

"Ain't they darlings! My! don't I wish I had such a boat!" cried Kitty, in ecstasy, as she watched them; and then they were both close aboard and remained hovering on the top of a wave like two seals, abeam of the ship, which had just hove-to.

"Hayee! Sheep! sheep!" cried one of the kayakers—the man—in a high, shrill voice. "Rope, cappen, rope, mebbe!"

Uncle Jabez made a silent sign aloft, for he was not given to noise on his own ship, and one of the oarsmen, who had climbed out on the lee main-yard-arm, flung a line down from his lofty perch right on top of the kayak.

The Esquimaux caught it dexterously and passed arunning bowline around himself and his frail craft.

"All right, cappen! Mebbe you hoist away now," yelled the shrill voice; and in a moment more man and kayak were swung clear of the water and came flying on board like the end of a pendulum! Both landed on the deck with hardly a bump, and in another moment the active kayaker had cast off the line and was yelling to the man on the yard-arm:

"Hayee, you man! Mebbe you bring in Kablunet, tra! She my darter."

Uncle Jabez gave an affirmative nod and the man at the yard-arm hastily gathered up the slack of the line and cast it out to the girl, who sat in her canoe a little way off, keeping it hovering on the top of a wave, as if afraid to venture too near the ship in her kayak.

Kablunet, if that were her name, proved as quick as her father, and came flying on board at the end of the whip with equal safety and grace. By the time she was inside the bulwarks, the old Esquimaux had cast off the hide band which lashed the skirt of his jacket to the kayak's manhole-rim, and had drawn himself out of his shell.

Then all his grace and activity were gone in a moment. The curious gazers saw a short stout man, not more than five feet high, with a round smooth face, high cheek-bones and little black eyes, a dark brown skin and a general Indian look about him. He was dressed in a suit of brown sealskin, and looked lumbering and unwieldy as soon as he stood up. Yet his flat face was the personification of shrewdness and good-humor if it were not handsome, and Kitty could hardly help laughing as he turned to Uncle Jabez saying in his shrill tones:

"How do, cappen. Mebbe you got glass rum board, hey? Baccer, hey? The Kalatoonah, best pilot in Disco—Rum and baccer, hey?"

Give Mr. Kalatoonah a paper of tobacco and a glass—a small glass, mind, steward—of rum," said Uncle Jabez with a smile. "And what will the lady have for herself, Kalatoonah? How comes it that you allow her out in a kayak? I thought your women were only let into the oomias."

Kalatoonah's face changed from its usual merry grin, and he took Captain Coffin to one side and said in a mysterious tone:

"No say nothing—Kablunet hear you, she sink ship—great witch—hub to let Kablunet go in kayak—all mans' afraid."

Captain Coffin smiled and looked rather curiously at the girl, who had just disengaged herself from the sole of her canoe. Kate Macy and the boys were staring at her with great interest, for such a being they had never seen before.

Kablunet, though a girl, was much taller than Kalatoonah, and in fact would have passed for a tall woman even among Europeans. Her face was entirely different from that of her Esquimaux companion, possessing a keen aquiline profile, large dark eyes, and a small red-lipped mouth with beautiful teeth. The shape of her countenance was oval, and its expression melancholy and proud. As for being Kalatoonah's daughter that did not seem possible, for no sort of likeness existed between them, save in dress and occupation.

The girl wore a cap plumed with the tail of a white fox, and her other garments were just like those of Kalatoonah—a jacket and trowsers, met by high boots reaching to the middle of the thigh. The materials however were very different from those of the kayaker's rough garments, being composed of the costly fur of the blue fox—a delicate dove color—while her boots were dyed a bright scarlet, and a scarlet sash was wound round her waist, giving a picturesque effect to the whole dress.

This singular creature now stood in the midst of the ship's deck, looking round her wistfully, when Uncle Jabez observed:

"Why Kalatoonah, you must have been in a hurry. I was here only ten years ago, and you were even married then. How does this girl come to be your daughter?"

The little pilot screwed up his chin into a funny sort of grin and whispered back:

"No speak dat way, cappen. She my darter, she say, and no mans dare say notings. Cappen, I tell you she great much ice witch."

Kate Macy overheard the remark, and turned to see if the girl had done the same, but Kablunet was apparently engaged in inspecting the rigging and the weather, for her eyes were roaming aloft, and

* Kayack means simply "man's boat" and "oomia" "woman's boat." The oomia is a large flat-bottomed craft; sharp at each end, but made just in the same way as the kayak, with a very light wooden frame covered with sealskin as thin as parchment. It holds as many as ten or fifteen people. No Esquimaux man will ever condense to enter an oomia. He regards his own swift but dangerous craft as the only thing fit to carry a man and a seal-hunter.

she walked to the weather side of the ship and peered out to windward.

Presently she came back to Kalatoonah, laid her hand on his arm, and said some words in the harsh Esquimaux tongue. The little pilot nodded, and said to Captain Coffin:

"Cappen, Kablunet say we hab sun in minute. Ice coming down. Make sail."

"All right, Kalatoonah, if you say so. Fill the maintopsail, Mr. Folger, and stand on. This pilot knows his way well enough."

The mate obeyed orders, and the Sarah Jane once more leaped forward over the waves like a living creature. Kablunet, after one glance over the crew, earnest and searching, as if seeking a face she knew, hurried away and walked to the quarter deck, passing Captain Coffin, and approaching the little group formed by Kate and the two Macy boys. In the same earnest manner she scanned them from head to foot, when a smile of pleasure appeared on her face, and she extended her hand to Kate Macy, saying some words in a strange, soft language, very different from that in which she had spoken to Kalatoonah. Kate, half curious and half puzzled, took the proffered hand, and replied in English:

"How do you do?"

With a frown the strange girl threw away the hand, uttered a sort of impatient, despairing groan, then turned to Reuben, whom she greeted in the same words that she had used to Kate.

To the surprise of every one, Reuben immediately answered in the same tongue, when the girl uttered a cry of joy and clasped him round the neck, bursting out crying and kissing him.

Before the astonishment had ceased, Kate Macy suddenly pulled the stranger away, calling out angrily:

"How dare you kiss my cousin?"

In a moment the face of the wild girl changed from intense emotion to bitter anger as she uttered a sort of sob of despair, then drew the knife in her belt and turned on Kate. Uncle Jabez started forward between them in alarm, when the mood of this singular being again changed; she thrust the knife back in her belt and burst out into a flood of angry words in the same soft language in which she had addressed Reuben, then rushed to her kayak and sprung with it on the bulwarks, from whence she plunged overboard into the boiling sea in the midst of the fog, which swallowed her instantly just as it broke loose from the vessel under the rays of the sun.

The sun had come as Kablunet said, and the wind had changed, but the girl had vanished as if she had never been, and Captain Coffin ejaculated:

"What in the world is the matter, and what did she say, Rube? The gal's crazy as a loon, I do think."

"No, uncle," answered the boy in a tone of some feeling, "she is a Spanish girl who has not heard her own tongue for eight years. Oh, Kitty, why did you insult her? She said—think of it—that she came to us hoping to find Christians, and that we were worse than savages, and she called on Heaven to punish us for rejecting an orphan's prayer."

"Spanish!" cried Uncle Jabez, amazed. "Why, Kalatoonah, who is this girl? Is she not one of your people?"

Kalatoonah was ghastly pale, and his teeth were chattering with superstitious fear as he replied:

"No, no, cappen. She witch—witch, I tell you—come in storm—go in storm—She—HAYEE!!! Stabboard!!!"

He ended in a perfect shriek of agonized warning to the helmsman, and pointed wildly to the bow.

There, not three hundred feet away, towered a huge iceberg, hitherto hidden by the fog, and the ship was running directly on it before the wind.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ICEBERG.

For a moment was all confusion on board the ship, the crew gazing at each other panic-stricken; and then the man at the wheel hauled at the spokes like mad, assisted by Jonathan Macy, who sprung to his side without orders, while Jabez Coffin roared:

"Port braces! Haul for your lives! Let go the starboard braces! Haul, I say!"

Recovering their presence of mind, the sailors rushed to their posts and pulled the yards round; while the ship, with a wide, sweeping curve, sheered away from the face of the great berg, shaving it so close that they could feel the rain of melting ice pouring down the side of the white precipice and dashed in their faces by the eddying wind, as they gathered away in the new direction.

Such a berg they had not yet seen in their progress from home to Disco. It towered more than two hundred feet in the air, with a great overhang above, the waves having hollowed it with huge caverns, from the top of which the water came pouring down in sheets of rain and mist. The sun, which had burst out so suddenly from the fog, shone full on this sheet of falling water, and spanned it with a dazzling arch of brilliant colors, while the great berg flashed out white at the summit, changing into a deep, intense blue in the caverns that pierced its cold heart.

Right and left in front of them it stretched as far as they could see, a wall of ice forbidding further progress, while flocks of gulls came screaming from its mighty summit round the masts of the ship, as if angrily resenting the intrusion. The wind, which had been shifting from the moment the Esquimaux pilot and the Ice Witch had come aboard, was now blowing right on the berg, and it seemed, for a short time, as if no human power could save them from being ground to pieces against the icy face of this Arctic monster; but Uncle Jabez was an old sailor, and he

held his luff like grim death, clawing off the face of the berg inch by inch, till at the end of half an hour of intense anxiety, the crew of the Sarah Jane had the satisfaction to weather the end of the ice-mountain and square away once more into the open water, with the gray bluffs of a group of rocky islands right ahead.

"Geerewalem! that was a close call," observed Uncle Jabez, wiping the sweat from his forehead, as he surveyed the peril they had just passed. "That darned gal must ha' seen it in the fog, and that was what she meant by calling on Heaven to punish us. Reuben, my lad, what was that she said to you first?"

Reuben flushed a little as he answered:

"She spoke beautiful Spanish, uncle. You know I picked that up at college. She asked me if I could talk it, and I said: 'Si, señorita, un poco!' That's all, 'Yes, miss, a little!' And then Kit, here, flew at her. I suppose the poor creature was glad to find some one spoke her tongue; for it's easy to see she's no Esquimaux, though she came here in Green land is the wonder."

As he spoke Kalatoonah called out to the commander:

"Hayee! cappen, mebbe you git anchor ready. Good ground bimeby, two, t'ree, forty-leven minute."

Uncle Jabez nodded and went forward to superintend the process of anchoring, for he was a careful commander; and Reuben remained leaning on the taffrail, gazing idly astern at the great grounded berg. As he looked, the mist, which had been driven away to the south by the changing wind, came stealing up once more, and then out skinned the slender kayak of Kablunet, as the mysterious Ice Witch came in sight, just at the edge of the fog, till she vanished in a great blue cavern in the middle of the berg.

"Strange creature!" muttered Reuben, as he gazed.

Then his meditations were interrupted by the hoarse cry of "Let go!" and theullen splash of the anchor told that the Sarah Jane was at rest. Almost immediately the ship was surrounded by swarms of Esquimaux in their kayaks, while a big boat of the same flimsy materials—a skeleton covered with parchment—came rowing toward them, propelled by six girls, and carrying in the sternsheets a white man with yellow beard and civilized garments.

This man, Kalatoonah told them, was Captain Nilsson, the Danish governor of Kronprinzen, come to pay them a visit.

Reuben went below into the little cabin, which he found deserted, and was saluted at once by a voice from one of the state-rooms at the side.

"Who is that? Is it you, Kate?"

"No, mother, it is I," he answered, and the voice replied:

"Oh, Reuben, have we got to land yet, my boy? Is there any news?"

"We have just anchored, mother, and the Danish Governor is coming aboard. He will have news."

There was a hurried rustle in the state-room, the door opened, and a pale, dark-eyed woman came out.

"Oh, Reuben," she said, impulsively, "I had such a dream about your father!"

"Yes, mother?"

The boy spoke soothingly, as one who was used to humoring the fancies of the invalid; for Mrs. Macy was such.

"Yes, Reuben, I saw him! He is alive! I am sure of it!"

But before Reuben could answer her there came a clattering on the deck overhead, with the sound of steps, and the boy signed to her to listen.

"It's the Danish Governor, mother. Listen."

"Mornin', Cap, mornin'," they heard Uncle Jabez say. "Glad to see yer. How's the ice up north?"

They could not hear the answer distinctly, for it was made in a deep bass voice and in the guttural Danish-English that prevails among sea-going Danes, who are said to speak all languages, including their own, equally badly.

But they could make out something like:

"Tag, Cap, tag. Ice pretty bad, but opening up. Ship nipped by Devil's Thump."

Reuben started as he heard it. He knew that the "Devil's Thump" was a remarkable pillar of rock on the shores of Melville Bay where the ice was at its worst, and he feared that the nipped ship might be the lost "Pride."

But he listened in vain.

There ensued some other conversation, of which the listeners below could not catch the purport, till suddenly Kitty Macy uttered a glad cry and they heard her run to the companion-hatch.

"Oh, aunty, aunty, they've seen Uncle Jonathan's ship. The Pride was here last year. Here comes the Governor to tell us."

As she spoke heavy steps came down the companionway, and Captain Coffin entered the cabin escorting the Danish Governor.

He proved to be a regular old sea-dog, round and jovial, fond of punch and pipes, and very anxious to trade with them.

He satisfied them that he had seen the "Pride" the year before on her way to the north, and as soon as he heard that they had come after her asked if they didn't want furs.

All the American ships bought furs of him, he said. It was ever so much cheaper than to bring them from the south; and he, Nilsson, was known to be the most honest trader in all Greenland.

They could buy jackets at a dollar apiece, trowsers of seal-skin and dog-skin socks, with heavy seal-hide boots, at such prices that a complete Esquimaux suit, hood, mittens and all, would not cost ten dollars. And they would take American gold,

The Lost Captain.

too—glad to get it. Was the ship ready for a winter in the ice?

"Oh, yes," replied Uncle Jabez; "ye see my sister, Miss Macy, she was jest crazy for me to go arter her husband, though I guess 'tain't much use; and as I seen she was bound to go, I thought we might as well keep warm. We've got the ship lined with cork, and felt over that, and she's got a solid mass of timmer in her bows, with any quantity of beams and shores to keep her from bein' stove in. I've b'en in these latitudes before, and I know what a nip from the ice is. She'll lift right square out on top o' the ice, this ship will, afore she starts a plank or a rib, and I've got her sheathed with an inch of iron from stem to stern."

"Dat is goot, dat is goot," replied Nilsson, approvingly. "Dere was six whalers all nipped by the floes in Melville Bay last August, and every one went down to de bottom, smashed."

"Ah, that reminds me," said Uncle Jabez, with a start. "Do you know a gal called Kablunet?"

The question produced a strange effect on the jolly Dane, who had hitherto answered in a prompt, business-like way. Uncle Jabez had asked about Kablunet thinking that she might be a relic from some abandoned Spanish ship, the story of the whaler bringing her to mind. But Governor Nilsson looked so grave that his host saw at once that something was the matter.

"Yes, I know her," he at length said, with an obvious effort. "You know, of course, that is not her name."

"Indeed!" and every one in the cabin waited to hear more with considerable interest.

"No, indeed. Kablunet is the Esquimaux word for a white woman, that is all. They call us—you—Kabloonah. This girl is not an Esquimaux at all, though she makes that drunken dog, Kalatoonah, call her daughter. No, she comes from no one knows where, and the people say she is a witch."

Then the Governor refused to say any more about her, and after a little more general conversation he left the ship, inviting all hands to visit him at the "Palace," as he dignified a small one-story wooden house, which was the only respectable mansion in Kronprinzen. The rest of the people lived in huts about two-thirds buried in the ground, where the whole family dwelt together in one room, much in the manner of pigs in a sty.

Reuben had, however, taken into his head a great fancy to know more of this mysterious Kablunet or White Woman, who spoke Spanish and came from no one knew where. Without saying anything to any one on board about his design, he went ashore in the boat with his uncle.

CHAPTER V.

THE SPLITTING OF THE ICEBERG.

WHEN Uncle Jabez Coffin returned from his trip to the land on a bargain for furs, he found the ship in good condition, thanks to the provident care of Mr. Folger, the mate.

He had very good success in his fur-trading, securing enough garments to make his whole crew independent of other covering in a winter in the ice, and it was with a sense of confidence and satisfaction that he returned to the ship and told the steward to serve supper in the cabin.

The party were about to sit down when Jonathan suddenly remarked:

"Where's Reuben? I've not seen him since we went ashore in the boat."

"Waal," observed Uncle Jabez, "that's rather strange of Rube. Mebbe he cum aboard afore we did and is sleepin' in his berth. Go look, Jonathan."

Jonathan went and returned with the report that no one was there, and inquiry through the ship developed the fact that Reuben had not come on board at all.

One of the sailors, however, said that he had seen Master Reuben paddle by the ship's quarter in a native kayak, heading out to seaward in the fog, hard! If he ain't out of hearing, that'll guide him here."

All hurried up on deck, and the ship's bell was set tolling as hard as they could make it go, while Uncle Jabez had the little brass signal-gun fired at intervals, to guide the belated Reuben into port.

The unusual noise on board the ship soon attracted the attention of the people on shore, and brought a cloud of kayacks hovering round them like sea-gulls round a dead whale. By questioning some of the owners of these kayacks, Uncle Jabez learned of Reuben's late purchase, and the price paid therefor. The boy had secured a boat newly covered with seal-hide, with all its appurtenances, in return for an old "pepper-box" revolver of antique pattern, which Reuben had bought in Boston at a pawn-shop for the sum of two dollars, with an eye to trading among the savages.

When Uncle Jabez heard this he gave a dry sort of laugh, and observed:

"I guess we don't need be skeered 'bout Rube. Any feller that kin trade as smart as that, kin take keer of himself in a fog."

Nevertheless the old sailor did not fail to inform the kayackers that his nephew was lost, and to offer a big butcher-knife to the man that should bring him back.

"What could he have gone away for?" said Mrs. Macy, as she looked away into the fog.

Jonathan's face flushed as he answered:

"I think, mother, he went after the girl Kablunet, that came aboard with the pilot this morning."

I saw a kayak enter that grounded iceberg just as the fog closed; and there was Rube by our taffrail, staring out after it. He's out in that grounded berg, and I'll bet on it."

They were startled by a low groan from Uncle Jabez as Jonathan finished his story.

"Then Lord ha' mercy on the poor boy!" he ejaculated; "for that 'berg's goin' to split jest as sure as—"

He stopped short, when a loud crash like thunder was heard out in the midst of the fog, followed by the frightened screams of sea-gulls and the shouts of the kayackers in the fog.

"She's split, by thunder!" ejaculated the old sailor, unable to control himself. "The Lord grant they were not inside the 'berg! Hold on, for there's a big sea coming."

The kayackers out in the fog here uttered a simultaneous cry of warning, long and shrill, and the sailors could hear the low roar of the surf on the rocks outside the harbor, swiftly advancing toward them.

Then the ship began to roll uneasily at her anchor, and every one, by an instinct of peril, caught hold of the nearest rope or belaying-pin for support. Presently Kate Macy, who was by the taffrail, screamed out:

"Look, look! Hold on tight."

But Jabez Coffin had his sister fast long before that, and stood with one arm round her and the other holding a shroud, waiting. Mrs. Macy shuddered and hid her face in the old sailor's breast after one brief glance astern.

There, looming up out of the fog, came a smooth green hill of water, apparently as high as the ship's main-top, sweeping straight down on them as they rode to anchor on the ebb-tide, stern out to sea.

In another moment it was on them. The ship rose to meet it till the anchor snubbed her, when the great billow swept over the taffrail and cleared the decks in a moment, roaring down the open hatchways in a mighty torrent, and sending loose spars, boxes and bales washing down toward the shore of Kronprinzen.

As for the living beings, every one that could not hold on was washed overboard, including three sheep and a chicken-coop full of fowls; and, worst of all, Captain Coffin and his sister were dashed up against the foot of the mainmast, being torn from their hold at the mizzen rigging.

That done, as if satisfied with its errand of harm, the monster wave spent itself on the beach at Kronprinzen without doing further damage, and left the Sarah Jane tossing wildly to and fro on the succeeding billows, each less than the first, until the sea again subsided into calmness.

CHAPTER VI.

WHERE WAS REUBEN?

BUT where was Reuben and where was Kablunet all this time?

Jonathan and Kate were so busy at first that they had no time to think of this.

There was Uncle Jabez down with a couple of broken ribs, and Mrs. Macy strangled into insensibility by the great wave, the cabin three feet deep with water and the hold nearly the same. By the time they had sent the two patients to upper berths in the state-rooms, and had the crew well to work at the pumps clearing the water from the vessel, the wind had dissipated the fog almost entirely, and they could see for ten miles in any direction.

But though the kayacks were plenty, dancing about on the white-capped waves, not a sign could be seen of the blue fox fur of Kablunet nor of Reuben's pea-jacket in any one of them.

After awhile the men began to come in slowly and unwillingly, as if they disliked to lose their promised reward, and brought the report that in their opinion the young Kabloonah must have been close to the berg when it broke up, and must have been pierced by a falling fragment, for had he been outside the range, no sea, however high, could have sunk his little craft.

As for Kablunet, they only shook their heads mysteriously when asked about her, and expressed an opinion that she was all right somewhere, no matter where. She was a witch and never so much at home as among dead men. Indeed, she had sucked the blood of many of them.

This sort of stuff, delivered in broken English at such a time, had its effect on the sailors, already frightened by the accident to their ship and commander; and several old salts came aft to Mate Folger, now in charge of the vessel, to ask that he would set sail to return to Nantucket. "There was no luck aboard the Sarah Jane with a crazy woman on board and darned Greenland witches trying to swamp the ship. What if the curse had failed once, it might drown them all next time, and in the meantime they ought to be going home. There was no luck on the ship anyway, for she had sailed on Friday; and now the captain was down and going to die. They were not going to be put under no youngster like Jon' than Macy, who had never sailed in any craft bigger than a schooner before, and was no navigator besides. They wanted a sailor like Folger to lead them."

The mate—he was a big, brawny Nantucketer, and a devoted friend of Jonathan Macy, senior—heard them patiently through, and when they were all finished demanded:

"Well, my lads, d'you know who owns this here ship and who fitted her out?"

"Cap. Coffin," was the general reply.

"Jes so. Cap. Coffin. Well, and ef he dies, who owns this ship?"

There was a puzzled silence, till an old seaman answered:

"Dumno, S'pose Marm Macy. But she's a woman. She can't sail a ship."

"Waal, and can't I sail it fur her?" asked Folger, in louder tones. "Now you look a-here, boys, don't you git skeered afore you're hurt. Cap. Coffin ain't dead yet by a long chalk mark, and Marm Macy ain't dead nather, and ef they both dies, this ship b'longs to Marm Macy's children, and I've been made their guardian all shipshape and reg'lar, and I'm a-goin' to take this here ship jest as fur into the ice as the Lord'll let us git, a-huntin' fur Cap. Macy. You hear me? And you're a-goin' with us and a-goin' to do your dooty without any more grumblin', or I'll know the reason why. And if there's any man here that thinks he kin whip Zek'l Folger, jest let him step out here and I'll tell him, all shipshape and reg'lar Now, then."

As the burly mate finished, there was a blank silence among the men, and then the old sailor who had before spoken said:

"Waal, ef ye take it like that, we've no more to say, mister; but there ain't no luck around this here ship. We knows our dooty. Good-mornin'."

Folger grinned as they went forward, evidently much crestfallen, and observed to Jonathan Macy, who had just come up from the cabin:

"Don't you be skeered, Master Jon' than. I'll keep this here ship fur you and Master Rube jest as long as there's a stick afloat."

"Alas, Zeke, I fear we shall never see poor Reuben again," was the desponding reply of Jonathan.

"Where can he be?"

"Why, aboard the berg in coarse," was the comical reply. "Tain't to say because one man's a-split-face berg over a mile long, that he's a-goin' to stand right in the very place that it splits. Them there bergs jest drapp'd off easy, and very likely didn't cant more nor fifty or sixty feet in half a mile. It's the size of the critters makes them big waves. Why I've seen 'em up at Omenak's Fiord where we're a-goin', break off from the glacier by two mile at a time, and send a swell clear across to the Middle Ice, nigh twenty mile off. But, the bergs don't topple right over, as them professors tells. It jest draps over easy-like, a square mile at a time."

"Then what do you think we'd better do, Zeke?" asked Jonathan.

"Waal, I'm thinkin' that as there's a good stiff breeze and open weather now for awhile, them bergs is likely to stay in sight some time. The kayackers daresn't go close to them, for fear of gettin' swamped if they was to shift sudden. You jest take the life-boat and four men, with a lug sail, a compass and some grub, so you don't git starved if they ketches you, and you kin sail there afore they git out of sight. Go near each berg and holler for Reuben like sixty. If he's thar, he'll answer."

The mate ordered out the starboard quarter-boats and four men were told off for her crew, a week's provisions and a compass put in, the boat let down, and then the young sailor went over the side and took command.

The nearer the boat came to the bergs, the more

sensible were the rollers; and just as they were

within about three hundred yards of the largest

of these monsters, down went one side, up went the other, and the gigantic rocking and heaving

about like a cork.

Again and again Jonathan hailed at the top of his voice, sounded a whistle, and fired off one barrel of his pistol at the berg. All was in vain. They

nothing but a clean precipice of ice before them,

from which they kept at a respectful distance.

Full of forebodings, he ordered the men to steam out toward the other berg.

Within half an hour they had sailed clear round this, hailing at intervals, but obtaining no response.

Poor Jonathan persevered as long as there was a

sort of hope, but at last he broke down with a

sigh of despair, threw himself back in the stern-sheets of the boat, and groaned out:

"He's dead, boys, he's dead or he would have

answered me. Pull back to the ship. I'm all done now. I have no brother."

CHAPTER VII.

REACHING THE PACK.

WHEN Jonathan Macy returned to the ship with the sad news of his brother's disappearance it came a serious question with all whether they should not return to the United States and abandon the object of the expedition at its very beginning.

The only person who opposed this design was Folger, now in command of the Sarah Jane. The old Nantucketer had a great deal of determination in his character, and was not easily put down by versatility. He comforted the young people by representing to them that to go back would entail a passage of at least three weeks before reaching a place where a surgeon was available, while by going forward as far as Uppernavik, the most northern of the Danish settlements, they would meet a doctor. The "Inspector" or Governor of that place was a Danish surgeon, formerly of the navy, who had settled there for some years and was said to possess great skill.

Encouraged by these representations Jonathan made no opposition to the project, and the Sarah Jane weighed anchor within twenty-four hours of his return and stood off to the north along the coast.

The wind being fair and good, they passed Kronprinzen the next day, and noticed on the way the berg which they had seen drift off from before the destruction of Reuben.

The great berg was sailing majestically out to sea "into the Middle Ice," as Folger informed them.

The Lost Captain.

the course being now no longer northerly, but due west.

"But where is this Middle Ice?" asked Kate, who had come on deck for a few moments and overheard the remark. "The sea is open and there is no ice in sight."

Zeke Folger looked up at the sky, and then turned round to the westward. Kate's eyes followed him, but saw nothing to indicate ice, save the one rising berg. The sky was of the softest and purest blue, as dark as ever it is in Italy, and not a cloud streaked the expanse. The sun, which had been shining bright and day for over a week, hung in the north-west, for it was some time after nominal midnight, and the great orb of day had recommenced its ascent.

"Out in the west there was a bright yellow glare, rising several degrees from the horizon, and it was at this that Folger pointed.

"That, miss, is the *icebiuk*, as you've no doubt heard tell on. Whenever you see that, that's any quantity of ice for the sun to shine on. If you'll look over the land you'll see the same, for the ice covers all Greenland, so I've heerd them say as ought to know."

"Has any one ever been there to find out?" asked Kate.

"Guess not, miss. Some's tried it, but as soon as they gets up on the hills in the summer they finds the snow so slushy they can't git over a mile or two from the coast; while as to goin' there in winter, no sailor could stand the cold."

"What is the reason that we see that line of ice on the coast yonder, breaking the black rocks?" said Kate, pointing to the north-east.

There was, indeed, a singular interruption at that point to the frowning monotony of the black bluffs that have given to Greenland its appropriate name of the "Land of Desolation."

About five miles to the north of them commenced a perpendicular wall of ice, losing itself on the horizon, its edge outlined sharply against the rocky coast.

"That's the great glacier of Omenak's Fiord," answered the mate. "Talk of not seein' ice anywhere! You'll see enough inside of three hours to satisfy you for the rest of your nateral life, miss; or my name ain't Zeke Folger. That's only the beginning of it, but it goes up north for forty mile in the clear, and the bergs breaks off in the middle all the summertime. Now's the thick time for 'em. The Hoskies call the glacier a cow and says the bergs is the udders. I tell you it's a grand sight to see the glacier a-calin'. We'll see enough on't afore long."

He pointed off the starboard bow of the ship, and they could see, outlined on the horizon amid the yellow glare of the ice-blink, a fleet of sparkling white bergs, that seemed to stretch out in front of the great glacier-belt of Omenak's Fiord.

Within half an hour they were close to the fiord and behind the sea covered with a confused mass of bergs and floes, crashing into each other and slowly revolving in the currents and eddies of Baffin's Bay. Out to sea stretched the white fields as far as the eye could see, bergs frozen fast in floes, floes piling themselves up in hummocks at the foot of bergs, and forming that vast and impenetrable mass, known among whalers as "The Pack" or "The Middle Ice."

Alberto they had known nothing of the possibilities of ice navigation, having traversed open water till they reached Disco Bay, where the grounded bergs was their first introduction to the wonders of the Arctic regions.

Here they saw the terrible Middle Ice as it appeared to the shore, and a sufficiently cheerless solitude it appeared to them. Only between it and the shore stretched a narrow black line of open water, revolving into pools here and there, from which ran similar streaks of black into the heart of the Pack.

"There's the 'leads,' and that's the coast-water," explained Folger, pointing them out to his passengers.

"All along the edge of the glacier that's allers open water, but we daren't go into it now, till the ice's let the ice out further. If a berg was to break off and we inside of a mile off, blessed if I don't believe we'd git swamped teetotally, or git bumped away in the floes hard enough to smash every stick of barky."

"Then what shall we do?" asked Kate.

"Waal, marm, either we've got to haul up to one of them bergs and wait our time till the ice opens, or we've got to folter one of them leads, with a chance of its closin' on us and givin' us such a nip as would set us high and dry, if not bu'st us all to bits."

"Waal, marm, not that," said Kate, with a shudder.

"It would make me think of poor Reuben all the time."

"We can wait it is," replied Folger; "and of we don't see Master Rube before the ice opens I'm much marr'd. One comfort in these latitudes is, a feller can't go any further than the ice 'll let him, and the ice 'll let him allers ketch up as soon as they both run alike."

As he was speaking, Jonathan Macy, who had been up on the rigging all this time, hailed the deck in tones of great excitement from the fore-peak.

"I see you Folger! I see some one on the ice, coming this way."

"Wharaway, boy!" hailed the mate, in answer.

"Don't be too sure 'taint a seal or a b'ar."

"No, it's a man dragging a canoe. It's a Hosky, and he's comin' straight for us from the middle of the pack."

Folger took up his glass, gazed in the direction indicated, and then muttered:

"Sure enough, 'tis a Hosky with his kayak. What in thunder was he a-doin' out thar!"

They could only see with the naked eye a little black speck on the whiteness of the ice, but that it was moving and advancing toward them became plainer and plainer.

Folger put the ship about and skirted the pack till he came to a lead, which opened a black, winding water-way in the direction of the moving speck.

Into this lead he steered the ship, under a fair wind, which was doing its part, with sun and current, to widen the passage.

The black speck had already resolved itself into a man dragging a kayak, and now it hastened toward the lead, and soon after came down toward the ship, the canoe skimming along over the black water.

Within twenty minutes it was close aboard, and they saw the squat figure and comical grin of Kalatoonah in his kayak.

"Hoyee, sheep, sheep!" shouted, or rather yelled that redoubtable hunter, holding up a square white paper; "me got letter, much heap letter, Missy Rube. Mebbe me come aboard for rum and 'backer, hayee?"

And Kalatoonah laughed heartily at his own wit.

CHAPTER VIII.

REUBEN'S LETTER.

The Sarah Jane was the scene of great excitement, immediately on the receipt of Kalatoonah's news.

Jonathan came flying down a backstay, in his haste, too eager to take the regular way down the shrouds. As for Kate, her face was a study in its alternations from red to pale, from pleasure to resentment. Folger grinned all over his face with pleasure, repeating:

"I told ye so. That boy ain't no green hand, I tell ye, of he never did go to sea afore this."

The very foremost hands, who had been the loudest grumbler before, crowded to the side of the ship to hear the news, and began saying to each other that:

"That 'ere quiet Macy boy was a chip of the old block, arter all."

Folger called up the steward to provide the biggest plug of pigtail tobacco, and an extra large tin cup of strong grog for Kalatoonah, while Jonathan eagerly superintended the lowering of a whip from the yard-arm to bring the hunter on board, boat and all, seeing that Kalatoonah declined to come without his kayak.

At last he had extricated his body from the man-hole and stood on deck, holding out the letter, which was addressed to:

"CAPTAIN JABEZ COFFIN,

"SHIP SARAH JANE MACY."

"Call up Uncle Jabez. No, he's asleep, and we cannot disturb him. What shall we do? Who'll open the letter?" cried Jonathan, the picture of perplexity. He had scruples against opening the letter, and yet felt that it was important to all that the intelligence should be made known quickly.

Mrs. Macy solved the doubt. Quite restored by the excitement of joy and hope combined, she burst into Uncle Jabez's state-room, crying out:

"Jabez, Jabez, the boy's alive! Here's a letter from Rube."

The old sailor turned round in the berth with difficulty and answered, gruffly:

"Then why in thunder don't ye read it out? I ain't no glasses here, and you knows that as well as I do. Let's hear what the young reprobate's got to say for himself with his greasy Hosky gals."

The old gentleman was in great pain and somewhat light-headed, and had evidently forgotten all about the supposed death of his nephew in the enormity of his elopement with a savage beauty.

Mrs. Macy, nothing loth, tore open the folds of the letter, which was not inclosed in an envelope but written on the leaf of a note-book, and read it aloud to the group of eager listeners that had followed her into the cabin.

The note was short and business-like:

"DEAR UNCLE JABEZ:

"There is an open lead of coast water two miles wide across the face of Omenak Fiord, which you can take the ship through if you push on at once. Melville Bay is more open than at any time for some years, and we can reach Smith Sound by the first of August if we hurry. Push on. I am going ahead over the pack with Dolores to look for leads and watch the ice. There are plenty of birds and seals. I am well and will meet you in the North Water."

"Your dutiful nephew, REUBEN MACY."

"Waal, what did I tell ye?" cried honest Zeke Folger, with a broad grin on his wrinkled physiognomy. "That boy ain't no slouch, Cap, is he?"

Uncle Jabez had been lying listening to it all placidly enough, but now he growled out:

"Who the dickens is this Dolores he tells on? That ain't a Hosky name."

"In coarse not," replied the mate, soothingly. "Don't git grouty over it, Cap. The boy's a-doin' more nor any one of us could do in his place, for we couldn't travel on the pack, and seems he kin."

"But who's Dolores?" repeated the injured man, obstinately.

"It's a Spanish name, uncle," said Jonathan, rather timidly, for he was mortally afraid of rousing his cousin Kate's jealousy; and, like many another big fellow was a hopeful subject for the henpecking process.

"A Spanish name is it?" sneered Uncle Jabez. "Thanky, I knowed that afore, boy. I've be'n to Cuba and Peru many's the time. But how did a Spanish gal git up here?"

The old sailor, in his pain and irritability, had taken a dim hatred to the idea of the wild girl he had

seen having anything to do with his family; and his sober moral ancestry of Pilgrims and Quakers seemed to rise up in judgment against this unknown Dolores, no matter what services she might render to the object of his expedition.

"I know who ye mean, boy," he went on. "It's that crazy gal they call a witch, and she's got our Rube bewitched as like as not. The boy's crazy and we've got to hunt him down and tie him up. If I don't give him and his Dolores a taste of rope's-end when I ketch 'em, my name ain't Jabez Coffin. Zeke Folger, you make sail on this here ship till I gets well 'nuff to come on deck, and you go through the leads this boy written about. If so be we gets into the North Water, as he says, all reg'lar and quick, very good. But when you meets him and his Dolores, you jest send down for me. You hear?"

"Yes, Cap," replied the honest mate, soberly.

"Then git out of my state-room, all but Kate," said Uncle Jabez, in the same crusty tones. "I want to sleep and Kate kin bring me a mug of beef tea afore that."

Then the old sailor turned his face to the wall in sulky mood and his auditors left the cabin somewhat cast down in spirits.

Kate was the only one who seemed to be cheerful, and she devoted herself to Uncle Jabez with an assiduity that showed how she appreciated the punishment he had promised to mete out to her unknown rival, as Kate persisted in thinking her.

Folger grumbled a little to himself when he got on deck, but made no audible remark on the subject of the captain's ill-temper; and then he called the hands aft and made them a short speech, telling them how Mas er Rube was out in the pack hunting out a safe passage for them, and that he hoped to be safe through Melville Bay and out in the North Water in a few days, if they had any sort of luck.

So great was the change from their previous gloom produced by the prospect of change that the men saluted the speech with three cheers and returned to the forecastle to work with a will.

The ship was now put about and ran out of the lead into the strip of coast water between the pack and the glaciers of Omenak's Fiord, when Folger stood boldly on toward the north.

The sun still shone brightly out; for the space occupied by the open water was too small to occasion any very heavy mists, and the Arctic atmosphere is always dry over the land.

There let us leave the Sarah Jane, entering the recesses of Melville Bay, where so many whalers have come to an untimely end, while we return to the absent Reuben.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ICE QUEEN.

REUBEN MACY had, as the Esquimaux said, left the ship in a kayak and rowed out into the fog to find the mysterious Kablunet. Within five minutes from the time he paddled out he was entirely lost in a gray sea of mist.

Presently he was sensible of a bright white sheen in the fog on his right hand, while a chilly atmosphere enveloped him, and the rush of falling water warned him that he was close to the berg.

The fog was so thick that he could not tell how near he was except by the splash of a torrent in the sea ahead of him, of which the drops came in his face at intervals. Therefore he turned to the right and skinned round the foot of the berg, following all its sinuosities through the bewildering mist, guided by the white glare, till on a sudden he came to what seemed a great black cloud, and knew that the cavern was before him.

Judging his distance when he had arrived at the center of this dark opening he steered in, and was soon rewarded by a strange sight.

There, in the very heart of the iceberg, gleamed the ruddy light of a fire.

The tunnel through which he had penetrated into the berg was about fifty feet high by twice that breadth, marking the existence of some softer stratum of ice in the original glacier which the sea had excavated from its more stubborn vicinity.

As he made these observations and found the air clearing around him, he looked up and saw that the roof of the tunnel was rising and the passage itself widening into a vast hall, apparently in the very heart of the berg. From this roof lines of falling raindrops proclaimed the frail tenure by which Nature held all this magnificence in the face of the monarch sun, even while the drops themselves looked like gems or sparks as they flashed in the red light of the fire.

But beautiful and weird as was this scene, Reuben noticed it but little. All his attention was concentrated on the mysterious Ice Witch herself, as she stood on the icy shore of this strange lake-chamber, leaning on the paddle of her kayak, while her frail craft lay beside her.

The support on which she stood was a smooth mass of ice, rounded by the action of the water and made of harder materials than that portion of the berg which had fallen away into the tunnel. This icy promontory stood out from one side of the lake, and was the only place where the walls did not come down perpendicularly into the water. Reuben sounded with his paddle as he entered the lake and found that he could no longer touch bottom, while the blackness of the water indicated greater depth.

He swept forward as noiselessly as possible, for the girl's back was turned to him and she was gazing into the fire—made of driftwood—when an unwary splash of his paddle in the deep silence of the icy solitude startled her. In a moment she dropped her own paddle, caught up from the ice a long slender harpoon and turned on the new-comer with an expression of fierce resentment, pouring out a torrent of Esquimaux words.

The Lost Captain.

Not particularly admiring the idea of being spear-ed by the beautiful savage, Reuben suddenly called out in Spanish:

"Señorita, fear not, it is I, a friend."

As he had expected, the effect was quick and sudden. The girl dropped her harpoon and clasped her hands.

"Oh, friend, friend, how long I have waited for you!" she ejaculated.

Reuben swept his little craft up to the icy shore and disembarked there without further speech.

Then she turned on him and addressed him in Spanish, gravely and rather suspiciously:

"Why have you come? Do you mean to harm me? If you do, take care; for Dolores Zuniga comes with the blue blood."

In his best Spanish, Reuben replied:

"Why should I wish to harm you, Señorita Dolores? I have come to see you, to ask pardon for the rudeness of which my cousin Kate was guilty to-day."

"Katrinal! Is that her name?" asked the wild girl, in a strange tone of voice. "She is a demon—a she devil—I hate her. Oh, if that old man had not got in my way, I would have killed her."

Her eyes gleamed with such anger as she spoke that Reuben felt heartily glad that Kate was not near them. He preserved a demeanor of quiet calmness, however, and answered, gravely:

"You should not say that. Remember that my father and hers were brothers. In her veins flows the same blood. If you hurt her, we cannot love you."

"Love me!" repeated the girl, with an accent of indescribable pathos. "Alas, I have had no one to love me ever since the Maddalena went down into the cold, black sea."

"The Maddalena was the ship in which you were wrecked?" asked Reuben.

The girl hesitated a moment, and then said:

"I will tell you, for yours was the first voice that I heard speaking my own dear tongue for eight long, weary years.

"You know perhaps that the Basques are whale-fishers of old, and that their boats used to come here many centuries ago. They are, you know, a people of the north of Spain."

"Are you then of Basque family?" asked Reuben.

"Señor, no. I should not then be a true Spaniard. But my father always loved the Basques, and loved the sea, too. He had made more than one voyage hither after whales, when the trade was good. I, who was brought up at home, always loved the sea, and used to beg my father to take me with him. At last he consented, when I was twelve years old, but said that this should be his last voyage. My mother, who loved him tenderly, begged to be permitted to go with us, for she said she had a presentiment that she would never see us again if we went without her. Ah, señor, the presentiment was true.

"We had a pleasant voyage, and touched at Julianashab on the south coast of Greenland, where we learned that the ice was unusually open and that whales were plentiful to the north. Full of hope for a short season and good cargo, we left Julianashab and steered out to sea, where strong south winds carried us along and no lee was seen. At last one day the wind died away, and we beheld great dark clouds coming down from the north. We did not fear, for my father said it portended only a change of wind, and our ship was prepared for any storms. Alas, señor, those clouds brought down a tempest and such thick fog that it was dark as night around us, even while the sun shone, as we knew that it did. My mother and I had been sent below, where we had fallen asleep, and I remember my father had come down to tell us that the storm was abating, when we felt a fearful shock and heard the men shouting, while the masts were falling and the ship crashed against something that we heard tearing her to pieces. Pale as death we rushed on deck, and found ourselves dashing powerless against the face of a great wall of ice. We heard another crash overhead, saw a white mass falling on us, and then came a shock to my poor head, and I knew no more till I found myself on shore at Kronprinzen, with the barbarians round me. I called for my father and they stared and asked me questions in their barbarous tongue. Then I knew that I was alone in the world. That is all, señor."

All was silence in the heart of the berg till Reuben asked:

"And how have you lived since? The Governor tells strange stories about you, I suppose you know."

She laughed bitterly.

"The Governor! A Danish swine, as stupid as the Hosky* hunters he lords over. He wanted me to marry his son Peter, a lout that can spear a seal and counts it a glory to live on these icy coasts. What, I, Dolores Zuniga, whose father was a hidalgo, marry a seal-hunter and live here forever! No! Rather perish as my father did!"

"Then that was the reason that you left his house?" asked Reuben.

The girl made him no answer, but stood staring at the fire with one finger uplifted, as if she was listening to some sound that Reuben could not hear.

A moment later she gathered up her harpoon, paddle and other appurtenances, and ran to her little kayak, crying out:

"Get afloat, quick, and follow me or you are lost. Quick, I say."

Vaguely dreading, he knew not what, Reuben obeyed her, and both pulled their light vessels to the water's edge jumped in, and paddled out into the center of the lake.

As Reuben struck out from the side of the lake he

* "Hosky" is the common Danish term for Esquiu-

heard a faint whine, like that of a young puppy, somewhere within the depths of the ice, beginning in a low key and running up into shriller accents.

He saw Kablunet hastily lashing the skirt of her short jacket round the rim of the kayak, and then remembered that he was clothed only in cloth garments. Realizing that he was in some unknown way to encounter waves that would wash into his kayak, he hastily stripped off his pea-jacket, made it into a roll, and wedged it into the manhole of the canoe, so as to fill up as much of the opening as was not occupied by his own person pressing against the rim. By the time he had done this, Kablunet was in the midst of the cavern, and he heard the whining sound again, seeming as before to proceed from the body of the ice.

Novice though he was in Arctic lore, he needed no explanation of the meaning of this sound. It rose and fell, and then rose again till it increased into a shrill scream, while the water of the lake trembled around them. Then came a terrible howl, broadening into a roar like thunder, and he shot his kayak up to Kablunet's side, asking:

"What shall we do?"

"Keep here," was the quiet answer in tones of resolute confidence. "The berg is splitting, but I have been on them before."

Then came a sudden crash, and a flood of daylight poured into the cavern, as the berg split open above their heads.

What happened next, Reuben hardly knew. The floor of the lake seemed to meet them as the end of the berg rose up, tossing them aloft, while the water receded into the end of the cavern, filling it up and drowning the fire in an instant. Then came another wave, as the berg rocked to and fro, and the light kayaks were caught up from the ice and dashed about like feathers.

Reuben plied his paddle manfully with the instinct of keeping in the middle of the water, to avoid being dashed against the wall of the cave, and had the happiness in a few moments of finding that the waves had subsided, and the water in the lake settled to its new level in quietude.

Then he had leisure to look round him and see what had been done. They were in one half of the former cave, which had been cloven asunder as cleanly as if divided by some mighty ax, and the sun was shining in upon them from a pale blue sky. The old floor of the cave had been tilted up at an angle of some ten or fifteen degrees, leaving the middle quite dry, and the water had settled into one side, from whence it was running off in a rushing torrent by the line of the old gallery, now inclined to the sea at an easy slope.

Within three or four minutes this torrent ceased to run, as the water in the cave sunk below the level of the gallery, and they were once more in a calm little pond, not more than a hundred feet across.

He paddled up to Kablunet, ejaculating:

"Heavens, what an escape!"

The girl smiled rather scornfully.

"It is nothing. I knew the berg was hung on a rock below, and would break just here. We are afloat now and going north with the eddy toward Omenak's Fjord. I always like to be on a berg when it splits. If you are in the right place it is glorious. Is it not?"

"It's fun after it's all over, but only if one is prepared for it," he grumbled. "But I shouldn't like to try it often."

Dolores paddled her kayak to the side of the little pond, without noticing his ill-humor.

"Come," she cried gayly, "follow me. You must learn to be an ice-master, for I am the Ice Queen. Ah, it is glorious to live on a berg. You cannot sink and there is always plenty to eat if you know where to find it. Follow me and I will show you my kingdom."

CHAPTER X.

LIFE ON ICE-MOUNTAIN.

Dolores scrambled out of her kayak and led the way to the top of the berg, which cost them but a few feet of climbing over what had been the roof of the old cavern. The ice here was soft, formed of compacted snow, and gave way easily to the grasp, permitting holes to be dug with fingers and toes.

When they reached the top, Reuben uttered a cry of delight as he looked out over the great field of ice and thence upon miles and miles of sun-kissed waves.

The wind was warm and pleasant, the fog had rolled away, under the influence of the sun, and they could see the coast around the bluffs of Kronprinzen, and the broad strait between that and Disco Island.

The fact was, as Reuben realized as soon as he got into the open air, the splitting of the berg had thrown their end up out of the water, till the top was nearly as high as the steeple of Trinity Church. The Sarah Jane, lying at anchor, looked like a toy ship, and the kayaks that were spread over the sea were mere dots on the waves.

As they looked, they saw the rollers which their own berg had made, just receding from the shores of Kronprinzen, and the kayaks were dancing about like eggshells between the berg and the shore. Looking out to sea, Reuben perceived the other half of their berg floating a few hundred feet off, slewing round in the currents that were carrying it further out.

Then he turned his attention to the summit of the floating island on which he had so strangely arrived, and perceived that it was the home of various and teeming life, as Dolores had said.

In the first place it was strewn with great boulders and fragments of rock, imbedded in the ice, some of them having sunk beneath the surface, leaving round

wells above them. Then there were similarly shaped masses of ice studded over the top of the berg, and reflected in the lakes and pools of fresh water with which the hollows of their island were filled.

All round these ponds, and blackening the surface of the ice, were thousands of sea-birds.

There were immense flocks of the little *auk*, a bird something like a clumsy-built duck, with very short wings and legs set at the end of its body. The tawny gulls, with their pure plumage and black beaks, circled overhead, screaming angrily at the intrusion, as Reuben and his guide advanced, while the great burgomasters, as large as geese, sat on the ice pinnacles and looked composedly down on the turmoil below.

There were a few crows, the same old birds which inhabit every latitude from pole to equator, and they were, as usual, quarreling over carrion, the refuse of dead fish brought up by the gulls to devour in peace.

"Are all icebergs as full of life as this?" asked Reuben, as he gazed on this scene with much interest.

"Some have not so much," she replied; "but these grounded bergs attract the gulls for miles, when the bears leave them."

"I hope there are no bears on this one," Reuben observed.

"Oh no, they keep on the floating ice which gets among the floes; for they live on the seals, and how could a seal get up here?"

"Very true," he admitted, and then they continued their walk over the top of the berg, till they found that their kingdom comprised an extent of about half a square mile, thickly populated with auk and gulls.

Dolores seemed to be in unusual spirits and conversed cheerfully, answering all his questions and showing a complete acquaintance with the life around her.

"Ah, señor, I told you it was not all gloom here," she said. "We could live on this berg all the summer, if we were so minded."

"Yes, but I don't see exactly how," he observed. "I have no gun, and I don't know how we're to kill anything without one."

Dolores laughed merrily but without her usual sardonic spirit.

"I will show you. That is one thing which these Hoskies are expert, and I have learned it all from Kalatoonah. They can spear the eider duck on the wing or the coot when he dives; and they never go out, any more than I do, without their weapons. See this."

She showed him a slender rod which carried in her hand. It bore a long point of ivory, the tusk of a walrus shaved down, and two short prongs beside it.

"That is the *neuvéak*—the bird spear; and here is the *noonsok*—the holder. Now you shall see me bring down one of those ducks as they pass."

She pointed to a flock of eider ducks that were coming along from the south, flying directly in a line with the berg. The birds flew quite low and grazed the summit of the ice mountain very closely.

Just as they came in range, Dolores took the *noonsok*—a rounded truncheon of wood, one side of which was shaved flat, with a groove down the middle—in her hand.

Reuben had been wondering how she would manage to cast the bird-spear with any degree of force, for it was too slender to be grasped in any way except by the tips of the fingers.

The holder, however, solved the problem in a simple manner. The groove down the center was just the size to receive the shank of the bird-spear, while the rounded outside afforded a good grasp for the whole hand.

In a trice Dolores had fixed the light weapon in its groove, and then cast it with admirable dexterity through one of the ducks, piercing it through and through and bringing it down on the summit of the berg.

"There," she said, proudly. "My *pobrecito*—my poor little man—shall not starve while Dolores is with him, for if she has learned no more in the wild lands, she has found out how to spear a duck on the wing."

But Reuben, much as he admired the girl's skill, was not yet converted to the delights of life on an iceberg.

"There is plenty of game," he admitted; "but where is our fire and how are we to cook it?"

Again Dolores laughed.

"Did you not find me by a fire in the ice cavern? I have my flint and steel yet, and there is wood to spare, floating in the sea. When Kalatoonah comes, we shall be all right."

"Very well, then," answered Reuben. "I have decided. I will stay, if you will take me where I shall hear tidings of my father."

Dolores turned toward him with the same joyful smile that had marked her when Jonathan first addressed her in Spanish, and threw her arms round Reuben's neck.

"My darling little boy," she cried out; "now we will be as happy as birds."

"Here comes Kalatoonah," continued his companion, gayly, drawing him toward the other side of the berg; and there, sure enough, came the squat black figure of the hunter, trailing his kayak after him over the ice.

Kalatoonah came up with a broad grin on his swarthy face, seeming to have entirely lost all the awe he had affected toward Kablunet when on board the ship.

He began by hailing Reuben.

"Hoy, young Kablunet, all mighty neap when about you. Think you drown. Boat out after you, and kayakers promise big, big knife, if day break."

CHAPTER XI.

OMENAK'S FIORD.

Just about the time when the Sarah Jane was weighing her anchor at Kronprinzen the dark waters of Omenak's Fiord, studded with floating bergs sailing out to join the wilderness of the Middle Pack, were also bearing on their bosom three of the fragile kayakacs in which the Hosky hunters constantly leave the dangers of the deep.

Their occupants were respectively Kalatoona, Kalunet and Reuben Macy. The boy looked haggard and weary, for he was unused to the persevering effort required to propel a kayak, as his had been paddled over forty or fifty miles of open sea.

He was only seventeen, while his companions were of full age, and though Dolores Zuniga was a woman, she had acquired in her hardy life a strength of limb equal to that of many men and far superior to the untrained powers of Reuben.

When at last they skinned into the line of coast-water at the foot of the great glacier, Reuben uttered a sigh of relief and was so much exhausted that he could hardly scramble out of his canoe on the white land-ice that stretched out for half a mile or more from the foot of the cliffs.

Dolores noticed his weakness and exhibited unusual tenderness toward him. The girl, besides being three years his superior in point of time, was at least ten his superior in all points of practical experience in the scenes around her, and treated him with a sort of protecting love such as she would have bestowed on some delicate pet.

She cheered him up to the exertion of landing and relieved him of the light burden of his kayak, which was all too heavy for the boy in his present state of languor and depression.

Then they set forth on their tramp over the "ice-foot," as Arctic voyagers term the belt of land-ice, and in time arrived at the base of the frowning gray rocks that skirted the edge of the vast glacier, bounding its icy flow as in walls of iron.

Leaving the kayakacs at the foot of the rocks, they ascended the bluffs by winding crevices, with which Dolores and her companion seemed quite familiar, and up which Reuben followed them as well as he could.

Arrived at last at a little plateau surrounded by frowning walls of rock, the girl said to Reuben:

"Now, *mi prorecio*, we can rest and sleep, for we are come to my garden."

Weary as Reuben was, he could not help a sigh of pleasure and admiration as he looked around him.

The little amphitheater lay at the edge of a tongue of glacier from which the melting ice trickled in a tiny stream that wound its way through a green carpet of moss, sprinkled with all sorts of beautiful flowers. The short Arctic summer, with its absence of night, its constant flood of warm sunshine, had filled this little nook with the most exquisite pleasure. Reuben, who was an enthusiastic botanist, could recognize some of his home friends—the wild honeysuckles, the anemone and the snowdrop mingled with primroses, saxifrages and gentians. Beautiful mosses and lichens were creeping over the ground and rising about two or three inches from the surface, while he could see little willows, averaging about six inches, actually overtopped by tufts of grass and heath.

There was something half-funny, half-pathetic in this little patch of garden at the edge of the wilderness of ice, enjoying its few weeks of sunshine ere it was to be hidden under the snows of an Arctic winter.

Reuben flung himself down on the moss and basked in the sun in this sheltered recess, where the air was positively sultry, and then tired nature asserted itself and he fell asleep.

When he awoke, nothing seemed to have changed save that the sun was in a different quarter of the sky and that the smoke of a fire near by was mounting straight up in the calm air. Overhead the gulls were soaring above the open leads, while the chattering and fluttering in the crevices of the rocks showed where the little auk had built their nests. Far out as he could see stretched the wilderness of the Middle Ice, studded with hundreds of huge bergs tangled among the floes, the yellow glare of the sun on the ice dazzling in its intensity, and only relieved by the dark lines of the occasional water-holes and leadings seaming the pack.

All this was stretched out as in a vast panorama, about three hundred feet below him, and he could see the dark bodies of the seals by hundreds scattered over the floes, basking in the sun, while the white puffs of spray in the middle of the water-holes showed where the whales and narwhals were spouting at play.

Reuben rose to his feet and uttered a cry of delight.

"How beautiful! Who would have thought to find such a scene here!"

It was indeed a perfect teeming preserve of animal life. The birds—auks, divers, ducks, wild geese, burgomaster and razor-back gulls, ivory gulls, grebes and coots—blackened the whole surface of the floes round the leads and water-holes, while a great herd of walruses were snorting and splashing in the coast water at the foot of the cliffs.

And what was that?

Reuben peered eagerly out into the coast water beyond the ice-foot. Yes, there was the unmistakable outline and creamy whiteness of a Polar bear! He could distinguish it even at that distance; climbing out of the dark water on the ice-foot, and stalking forward with lumbering tread toward the herd of walruses.

He had seen his first bear!

"Is it not beautiful, señor?" asked the soft voice of Dolores at this moment. "I told you it was not all gloom up here. I have found here the only moments of peace and happiness I have known since

the Maddalena went down. And here, too, I have found my only companionship save that of the pigs of Hoskies."

"What do you mean?" asked Reuben curiously.

"I mean that Mother Igloolik lives here."

Reuben started and remembered the errand on which he had come.

"Mother Igloolik here!" he cried. "Oh, take me to her. I feel quite strong now. The rest has refreshed me wonderfully."

"And has made you hungry too, *mi pobreco*—is it not so? See; I have been roasting you some birds for Kalatoona has killed for us. Eat, *muchacho*, eat, for we have hard work before us, and I must keep my little friend fat, or his ugly people will want to leave Dolores behind when she takes him back to him."

"I don't think there is much danger of that, Dolores," he answered gratefully. "You have been so good to me that they cannot help loving you for my sake."

"I hope so," she answered shortly. "That *demona* cousin of yours gave me but a cold greeting after eight years' among the savages. Eat, *muchacho*, eat, for we have far to go and you must send a letter to your people by Kalatoona while we go on again over the pack ice to the North Water. You may find your father, but for me, alas, there is no hope, for my father is dead."

Reuben obeyed her in everything wrote his letter by Kalatoona, as we have seen, and a few hours later the trio separated.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NORTH WATER.

We are out in the Middle Ice in the month of July. The great floes that ground themselves up into ridges and hummocks in the long winter night are now reduced to a soft and slushy state, disintegrating rapidly in the sun, and only shielded from entire annihilation by their enormous thickness. The hills and valleys that used to render the surface almost impassable have sunk to mere roughness, and the great field looks yellowish white, tinged with brown, as the season advances further and further. Scattered about in this wilderness of field ice are fleets of great bergs, for the most part fresh from the glacier, carrying their loads of boulders and gravel from Greenland valleys. These bergs appear to be stemming the ice fields as if impelled by some invisible power, for the surface current is setting the floes one way, while the bergs, stretching down for a hundred fathoms into the sea, have met the counter-current which is driving them onward in the opposite direction.

The low crashing of the loose ice as it streams past the bergs is a perpetual reminder of the restless character of the sea in those latitudes, and the frequency and size of the leads and water-holes is a proof of the warmth of the season.

Up to the north, at the very edge of the Middle Ice, the waves roll in on the fields, and the swell is transmitted for nearly a mile into the loose brash at the border of the pack. This is the favorite haunt of all the living beings—a strange assemblage—that pass their summers in migrating from place to place on the ice.

The birds of all sorts—ducks, auks and gulls—are thicker than ever at this period of the year, while the open water to the north is all alive with spouting whales. Since the decline of the fishery but few ships come out after whales now, and of these still fewer succeed in reaching the North Water safely, year by year. Therefore the huge creatures gambol undisturbed, along with shoals of the graceful spotted narwhals, with their long ivory horns, like sword-fishes, only more beautiful.

As for seals, they are tumbling and diving everywhere, and walruses are nearly as plentiful. One low flat berg is covered with these brown monsters of the deep, as large as young elephants, and more than one bear is prowling about behind the hummocks and bergs of the Middle Pack, watching his opportunity to dive unobserved into the loose ice after the seals, who are always on the look-out for their wily enemy.

Into the midst of this confusion of animal life, just as we come upon it, skinned two Esquimaux kayacs, about ten days after the Sarah Jane received Reuben's letter.

Dolores was in one of these frail vessels and Reuben in the other. No ship could have gone where they did, and the progress of an ordinary boat would have been almost equally difficult and laborious. With their light kayaks on the other hand the travelers experienced no difficulty in going where they would, and on the morning of the fifth day after leaving Omenak's Fiord arrived at the borders of the Middle Pack, and saw before them the dark waves of the North Water rolling smoothly under a cloud of gloomy fog that showed the difference of temperature between water and ice.

Here they were compelled to stay for several days, exploring leads and waterways, hunting ducks and seals, and generally enjoying a holiday while they waited for the appearance of the Sarah Jane.

At last, on the morning of the tenth day, they saw the white sails of the ship coming down one of the dark waterways through the loose brash at the edge of the Pack, and Dolores pointed it out to Reuben, saying, with a sigh:

"There, *muchacho*, are your friends. We have been very happy, have we not?—and now it is all over."

Reuben had been so happily engrossed in watching the habits of the animated nature around him that he had forgotten the existence of everything disagreeable in the world.

"Why should it be over?" he asked. "You will

come on board with me and everybody will be glad to see you for having taken care of me and showed them the way through the ice Pack."

"No, no, *muchacho*, I know better," answered Dolores, sadly. "You will see that they will look on us coldly and perhaps drive me away from them with contumely. Observe that Kalatoona has not come back as he promised. They have bribed him to stay on board and he has deserted us."

"Oh, nonsense, Dolores," answered the boy, with all the impulsive warmth of extreme youth. "They sha'n't turn you away; I won't let them. You shall stay with us all and we will take you back to Spain as soon as we have found father. I won't let them send you away. I like you ever so much, Dolores."

"Do you, *muchacho*?" she repeated, in a wistful tone. "Well, you will soon have an opportunity to show if you do, for your friends will be here. Let us go to them."

They entered their kayakacs and paddled out into the dark swells of the North Water, where there was nothing but a gloomy sky wherever the eye rested.

The ship was coming through the last brash ice and immediately fired its signal gun and hoisted a flag, as a signal that those on board perceived them.

They skinned rapidly on over the waves, the south breeze carrying the ship at a rate that enabled it speedily to overhaul them, and then came the first intimation from on board that Dolores was right in her conjectures.

The face of Uncle Jabez looked over the quarter, and the old seaman shouted in a gruff voice:

"Come on board, you young sinner, this minute. What are you doin' cruisin' about in company with a heathen Jezebel in breeches? Come aboard this minute, and see what you'll get."

Reuben was so much astounded by this salutation that he hardly knew what to reply, and very nearly got under the cutwater of the Sarah Jane in his confusion. As for Dolores, she said nothing, but kept her light kayak dancing about on the waves till the ship had passed them both, when Reuben was left under the stern, close to her, as the Sarah Jane rushed by.

"Paddle up into the teeth of the wind with me, *muchacho*, if you want to come with me," said the girl, in a quiet tone. "Your friends are angry. What said the old *marinero*?"

Reuben explained in Spanish that his uncle was angry with him.

"And for being with me?" she asked, keenly, as the ship went rushing away from them under the influence of the wind, sweeping round in a wide curve.

Reuben was obliged to own that she had divined rightly.

Dolores compressed her lips with an expression of pain, but her eye flashed with some of its old fire, as she answered:

"Yes. Had I let you drown in the splitting berg where you followed me without being asked, it would have been all right. I have saved your life and they are angry. Well, good-by, *muchacho*. I had a dream that is over. You shall go to your friends."

So saying, she paddled away, right into the wind's eye toward the ice of the Middle Pack, just as the Sarah Jane wore round and trimmed her sails to come back after the runaways.

Reuben hesitated a moment and then paddled after her, calling out:

"Do not go, Dolores, I will stay with you. I will not go back to them, if they do not take you on board too."

Dolores smiled slightly and her face brightened up as she plied her paddle, but she said not a word till they were in the mouth of a waterway, heading directly south into the eye of the wind, and bordered by the rotten brash ice at the edge of the Pack. Then she turned and looked round.

The Sarah Jane was close-hauled, heeling well over to port as she rushed up toward them. She had already entered the loose ice around the waterway, and her bow was pointed in a direction to cut them off from the Pack. The ship was not more than fifty yards off, and it was clear that she would pass before them. The crew were clustered on the bows and looking curiously over at the kayakacs, but the face of Uncle Jabez, red and angry as ever, hung over the lee-quarter, and Reuben could see his mother, his brother Jonathan and his cousin Kate, as the ship heeled over, all watching him anxiously.

Presently the Sarah Jane came crashing out of the ice into the waterway not twenty feet from them, and Uncle Jabez roared:

"Throw him a rope, the young sinner. Come aboard, I tell you."

"I won't, till you promise not to hurt Dolores," shouted Reuben in reply, and then the rope fell on him as one of the sailors cast it with due skill over the kayak.

Reuben threw it off impatiently, waited till the ship was almost on him, and then skinned away under her quarter and out to windward, following Dolores straight up the waterway into the heart of the Pack, where the birds and seals, frightened by the unusual sight of the ship, had already nearly disappeared.

"Come back, you young villain, or I'll send a boat after you," shouted Uncle Jabez, shaking his fist at Reuben, as the Sarah Jane plunged helplessly into the brash again, before she could haul her wind; but Reuben paddled on straight up the lead after Dolores.

Then the vessel tacked and came racing after them, going rapidly but still not rapidly enough for the kayakacs, which continued to paddle straight into the wind's eye.

Uncle Jabez seemed to be aware of this, for just as he crossed the waterway a second time, he dropped

a whale-boat from his quarter, which pulled straight away after the runways.

"Now, *muchacho*, do your best," cried Dolores, as she paddled on; and Reuben obeyed, so that the race became exciting.

The whale-boat was well manned and pulled hard, so that the kayakacs had all they could do to maintain the lead with which they had started—about a hundred yards.

After a little it became plain that the boat was gaining on them, and Reuben could hear the voice of his brother Jonathan shouting:

"Come back, Rube, come back! It is I, Jonathan, and I want to speak to you."

But Reuben was too angry to listen. He stuck to his paddle, following Dolores, and presently saw the girl skin in toward the ice, jump on a large floe, and set off at a run, dragging her kayak.

He imitated her, reaching the ice when the whale-boat was not fifty yards behind him, and followed the girl's example.

He heard the clatter of shipping oars, and Jonathan's stern order:

"Follow him, boys! Ten dollars to the man who catches him."

CHAPTER XIII.

DOLORES.

MANY hands make light work, and the crew of the whale-boat had no difficulty in hauling their craft upon the ice and shoving it forward over the floe till they reached the next lead. But by so doing they gave up all their advantage, inasmuch as the kayakacs could change from water to ice and vice versa five times as rapidly as the crew of the big boat.

Before two leads had been crossed Jonathan saw that the chase was useless, and reluctantly gave the word to pull back to the ship, which was still cruising about near the edge of the Pack.

No sooner was this the case than Dolores called Reuben's attention to it.

"Your friends are turning, *muchacho*. Now you can do as you please about returning to them. See, they are pulling back to the ship."

Reuben watched them a little while and then said half to himself:

"They will come back again. They will not leave me."

"What say you now, *señorito*?" Dolores asked. He had relapsed into English.

"I said they would come back for me. See, there is another."

A second boat was seen to drop from the ship's side and pull up the lead in which they were.

Reuben watched it closely and began to tremble.

"It is my mother," said he.

Dolores looked wistfully at the advancing boat and then with a strong effort observed:

"Then you must go to her. I cannot keep you from her. Go, *muchacho*, go to your mother."

Reuben trembled still more as he answered:

"Not without you, Dolores. You have done too much for me. Let us wait till they come up. My mother will not be so unreasonable as the rest."

Dolores made no answer, but remained quiet in the lead, watching the coming whale-boat, which contained his mother in the stern-sheets and was steered by Folger.

Very soon they were within hailing distance and Mrs. Macy began to call out:

"Reuben, my boy, what ails you? Will you not come back to us after all the misery you have caused us? What makes you act so?"

"I'm ready to come back at once, mother," replied the boy, resentfully, "but I'm not coming on board to be abused by any one. I've been doing more to hunt up father than any of you."

"But that was all a mistake, Reuben. Your uncle was hurt the other day. Mr. Folger says that his ribs were broken, and ever since they have been getting better he has been terribly cross. Come on board with me, my son."

"But then there is my friend and preserver, Dolores; she will be hurt or driven away," objected Reuben. "I cannot come unless she is properly treated, too."

Mrs. Macy looked surprised and offended as she said, coldly:

"I had hoped, my boy, that you would not have had the assurance to mention such a brazen creature to me, your own mother."

Reuben flushed scarlet and glanced at Dolores. He felt very thankful that she did not understand English, for she kept looking from one to the other in a puzzled sort of way as they spoke.

"Very well, mother," he retorted. "I tell you that if I had not found this *lady*, your ship would not be here now, and that without her we shall never find father. If you don't choose to take her aboard, I shall go on with her. We have crossed the Pack without the ship, and we can cross the sea, too."

So saying, he turned away, when his mother cried out:

"Reuben, my boy, come with us and we will do anything to please you. I cannot do without you."

Then the boy with a stroke of his paddle sent the kayak close to the stern of the whale-boat, where his mother leaned out to clasp him in her arms.

Like most boys of seventeen, Reuben was much averse to public displays of affection, and he quickly extricated himself with the low remonstrance:

"Don't, mother! I'm all right. Speak to Dolores and treat her civilly."

Thus urged, the mother looked at Dolores Zuniga closer than she had hitherto done, as the girl sat in her kayak a little way off, regarding them with a solemn, thoughtful expression of countenance.

"Come here, Dolores, this is my mother," explained Reuben, in Spanish, and the wild girl in-

stantly glided to the boat, where she gravely saluted Mrs. Macy with her Spanish:

"Dios con usted, señora."

"What does she say, Reuben?" asked the mother, timidly.

"She says 'God be with you, madam,'" answered the boy. "What shall I say to her from you?"

"Tell her I'm very happy to see her, and that I hope she'll come aboard to see her father Kalatoonah," was the reply, with some reluctance.

Reuben was shocked.

"Her father! why, she treats him like a dog. She is a Spanish *lady* of good blood, mother, and will be treated with respect or we shall lose her for good."

"Very well, my dear, do as you please," said the mother, resignedly. "Ask this lady—though a very funny lady she is—to come on board and then we will sail away as quick as we can, for Mr. Folger says the season is past its height already."

"Ay, ay," observed that worthy, who had maintained a discreet silence during the colloquy between mother and son, but now thought it was time to put in his oar; "July's past midsummer, and we begin to have nights in August. Glad to see ye, Master Rube, and hope as how ye've heard something about Cap. Macy. We found the channel jest as you write about it and got through the Pack quicker'n I ever seen a ship go afore. If you be a young sailor, you bids well to make a good one, Master Rube."

As they neared the ship Jonathan stood at the gangway to receive them, but Uncle Jabez and Kate were not to be seen, having remained below in sulky humor.

Now, however, all disagreeable things seemed to be banished by one consent, for Dolores was welcomed on board with perfect courtesy, her kayak and that of Reuben placed on deck beside that of Kalatoonah, who lay fast asleep on the lee side of the galley during the whole of the troubles, having gorged himself to repletion on the flesh of a seal killed by a shot from the Sarah Jane.

Then the good ship wore round on her heel and stood off to the north under a cloud of studding-sails, alow and aloft, leaving the white wastes of the Middle Pack behind and plowing through the dark clouds that hung over the waves of the great North Water.

Dolores withdrew herself to the taffrail soon after she came aboard and remained gazing idly over the stern at the winding wake of the ship. Reuben was closely engaged with his mother and Jonathan a little way off, answering questions as to his doings and discussing the probability of finding any traces of the crew of the Pride of Nantucket, so that the girl was entirely alone, and as usual gloomy in her thoughts.

The fogs and mists had settled in on them as soon as they reached the open sea, and the gloom of the prospect was equaled by the gloom in her thoughts. Dolores was in a singular position, left all alone amid strangers of a strange tongue so early, and now a second time cast among others, to whom even Danish and Hosky were unknown.

She felt herself more alone than ever, and a few silent tears had stolen down her cheeks when she suddenly started as some one touched her shoulder.

Looking round, she saw Reuben, Jonathan and Mrs. Macy regarding her kindly, when Reuben addressed her:

"Señorita," said the boy, in his best Spanish, "my mother has heard so much of you that she requests me to give you her thanks and blessings. Will you not join us in the cabin at dinner, and accept the use of a state-room and some dress more like that you ought to wear?"

For the first time Dolores glanced down at her scanty Esquimaux dress, fitting so closely, without a vestige of skirt, and blushed scarlet. The sentiment of civilized conventionalities, so long disused, returned to her in a moment as she looked appealingly at Mrs. Macy, avoiding Reuben's glance.

Mrs. Macy saw the glance and understood it better than all the Spanish. She came to Dolores at once, and saying, "Come along, my dear," carried her away below, where they were soon heard conversing amicably, Mrs. Macy using broken English as loud as she could speak it, under the common delusion that such a method makes a language more intelligible to a foreigner, while Dolores was answering with such few words of English as she had picked up, eking out with Spanish.

Jonathan and Reuben remained on deck with Folger, as the ship plowed on her way to the north through the open water, and saw but little of the wild girl for the next three days—if days they could be called where there came no night to end them.

When next she appeared they could hardly recognize her, clothed as she was in the garb of a civilized woman, her dark hair becomingly arranged, her face grave and demure, having lost that independent and defiant air which characterized her when she first sprang from her kayak. The effect of her appearance under the wing of the mother of the family was immediate and striking.

Jonathan became shyer and more distant than before, while Reuben waxed enthusiastic to his brother over the beauty of Dolores; Kate looked on in secret envy, and the mother was calmly satisfied with her work.

As for Uncle Jabez, he grumbled no more after he had once set eyes on Dolores in the dress of a Christian woman, but on the contrary began to tax his memory for all the Spanish phrases he had picked up in the course of his sea life, to converse with the señorita.

Therefore there was peace once more on the Sarah Jane, a peace that made their quest ever so much more pleasant, as they put degree after degree of latitude behind them.

They arrived at the northern boundary of the open water in a few days more, and saw before them the great sweep of Humboldt Glacier, which stretches

out a vast wilderness of ice, winter and summer, for a hundred and fifty miles.

"Good-by, water; now for the trouble in earnest," observed Folger, when they saw before them the ice-locked waters of Smith Sound. "Ef them as we're arter went through here, we'll have hard work folerin' them, but from the looks of things, I guess we're the first humans in these parts since the days of Franklin."

As if to give the lie to his assertion, the look-out hailed the deck:

"Flag, oh! There's a flag stuck in the ice at the foot of the glacier, sir, and it's moving."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LONELY FLAG.

THE sight of this lonely memento of civilized man in the midst of that howling wilderness produced a great effect on the ship's company.

They had been alone so long in the dark water and desolate ice that the feelings of all had become more or less gloomy, and this flag came to them like a visit from a friend long lost.

True, no one but the look-out had seen it yet, but for all that, they believed it was there, and expected to see it as soon as they approached near enough.

Uncle Jabez, who had been growing better ever since they reached the open sea, came on deck at the sound of the look-out's cry, and eagerly asked what was in sight.

The boys were full of excitement and Mrs. Macy turned pale and murmured prayers and thanksgivings.

All felt sure that this was some memento of the lost Pride of Nantucket, for no Polar expedition had been that way since the days of Hayes, ten years or more before.

Even Kate, who had been unusually silent and gloomy since the formal establishment of the beautiful stranger as a member of the family, came on deck with the rest and watched as eagerly as any while the ship rapidly approached the sweep of Humboldt Glacier.

The change from the dark waters and gloomy clouds of the North Water to the bright skies that hang over the ice in summer was already beginning. The whole of the horizon to the north, east and west was lighted up by the yellowish glare of the ice-blink, and they could see the outlines of the great fleets of bergs cruising about in the field ice before the sheet slope of the great glacier. The scene at Omenak's Fiord was repeated with greater intensity of whiteness and desolation, and it seemed as if they had indeed reached the end of the habitable world at last.

And yet there, sure enough, as the look-out had said, perched in the land-ice at the foot of the glacier, was a dark fluttering speck that they knew indicated a flag.

All the glasses in the ship were in requisition, staring at this relic of humanity in the midst of a wilderness, and Dolores was the first to call their attention to the fact that there was a hut made of timber near the flag.

This discovery intensified the interest, and Reuben, full of enthusiasm, proposed that he and Dolores should take their canoes and go to explore the mysterious waif.

No objection was made to this, save that Jonathan insisted on manning a boat to accompany them, and soon after the Sarah Jane had tied up to the solid land-ice by planting an ice-anchor, a keen race was going on between the whale-boat and the canoes, which should be the first to reach the flag, only attainable by crossing several loose floes intersected with leads and water-holes, all moving south under the surface current out of Smith Sound.

As usual in such cases the kayaks were ahead, and Dolores, who had resumed her convenient if un-feminine garments, was the first to reach the lonely hut and flagstaff.

Desolate enough it proved to be.

A small hut, built of timber that had evidently come from the skeleton of a ship, lay before them, empty of all save a few rough articles of furniture of the same materials. There was a fireplace of stones at the back, with a chimney, now choked up by the snow and ice, which had drifted in, melted and frozen again, since the fire had gone out—how long since?

Reuben came up and examined the place in silence and disappointment.

What was left of the flag was evidently not an American ensign, for the colors, as far as he could tell in the faded state of the bunting, were not the same. The staff bore only a few fluttering rags, of which part seemed to be a brownish red, and part a dirty yellow.

While he was puzzling over what this could be, Jonathan came up, accompanied by Folger; and the mate examined the flag with a critical eye, taking the rags of bunting in his fingers, feeling the texture of the stuff, and even snuffing at it, as if to find something that way.

All the time Dolores had been in the cabin itself, rummaging about, and presently they heard her utter a loud scream.

Hastily rushing in, they found the girl staring wildly at a rude table made of planks, that lay half-destroyed, in the middle of the cabin. Some one in former times had taken an ax to split up this table, probably for firewood, as the charred remnants of the plank lay in the fireplace, frozen up in a heap of snow-ice.

But what the girl was staring at was something in the table itself, rude letters cut in the plank.

As they entered Dolores turned to Reuben with an eager cry, clutched him by the arm and dragged him to the table, where she pointed with trembling hands at the letters.

"Tell me what you see," she panted rather than

spoke. "Tell me if I am mad or dreaming, *muchacho*? I cannot believe it. What does it say?"

Reuben eagerly inspected the letters, while a crowd of curious gazers were looking over his shoulders.

"There is an A, a Y, then D, E, and then the letter M," he said, at last. "They are on one line."

"And what is this?" she asked, in the same hungry tone, putting another piece of board by the table, where it filled the cavity.

"That is the letter I," replied Reuben, wonderingly. "What of it?"

"Can you not see? Are you blind?" she screamed, excitedly. "What does it spell? Read it aloud."

Thus adjured, Reuben looked again, and then started as the real significance of the letters flashed on his mind.

"Boys," he cried out, excited in his turn; "a Spaniard has lived here, for this reads '*Ay de mi!*' or 'Woe is me!' No one but a Spaniard would have carved those letters."

"Oh, *Dios, es mi padre!*" cried Dolores, clasping her hands. "It is my father, and he has been here! No one else could have done it. Oh, Mother of God, how I thank thee! He was not killed by the sea. He is alive. I shall see him."

And the poor girl began to laugh and cry in a breath, as she gazed at the mute evidences of what she was determined to believe to be her father, without reflecting that any other member of his crew might have carved the same.

"Do not be too sure, señorita," observed Reuben. "I should not like you to be disappointed."

"Disappointed!" she echoed, scornfully. "Where could another Spaniard come from in these solitudes? The men of the ship were all Basques, and very few could write their names. This is my father, and he is alive. Hunt now; hunt hard all of you, and we will find where he has gone and how he went. He is not dead, or his body would be here."

There was so much reason in what she said, when Reuben translated it, that Folger remarked:

"That gal ain't no fool. If it be her pa, we'll find more marks of it round here. Hunt, boys."

The whole party, sailors and all, ransacked the cabin thoroughly after this admonition, dug the snow and ice out of the fireplace, and brought out every piece of furniture to look for more carving.

Dolores soon found new evidence that her father had been there in the initials of his name, "G. P. M. Z."

"Gonzalo Pedro Maria Zuniga," she exclaimed, joyfully. "There, señores, who can doubt now? It was he, and he has been here. I see it all. He was not drowned, but escaped to the ice-pack and traversed it as we did. He made his way to the North Water, and either some Esquimaux brought him here, or he built a raft and sailed."

"But what made him come this way, I wonder?" asked Jonathan, innocently. "I should have thought he would have tried to go to the south to get home."

"Why have I stayed here, señor?" asked the girl, mournfully. "Because I thought I was all alone in the world, and hardly cared to live. So with him, no doubt. Bethink you that at one sweep he lost wife and children and all he held dear, and found himself alone in the world. He cared not much whether he went. As well here as anywhere."

"Perhaps so," assented Jonathan, in a thoughtful tone; and then they heard a joyful shout from Folger, who had been most active among the searchers.

"Hey, boys!" roared the mate, gleefully. "Here she blows! Here's old Nantucket fur ye at last, and none of yer Spanish lingo. Look ahere!"

The voice came from the foot of the glacier, and Folger came toward them, carrying something that looked like a pair of old trowsers, which indeed it was.

An ancient and dilapidated pair of canvas continuations with a square patch in the seat he held up to sight, shouting:

"These is Ben Hackett's old pants, or may I never draw another live breath, boys. I know that patch as well as I knows my grandma. Ben's be'n a-round 'round these rocks, and he's had these old overalls on 'bove his cloth pants, 'cause he was allers powerful neat; and the boys has be'n a-gibin' him that sassy he throw'd these here old pants there, to be shet on 'em fur good; or else some of the boys stole 'em and put 'em there for deviltry. Boys, the pride's be'n here, and took that Spanisher off, you jest bet."

Indeed it seemed likely that the mate's suggestion was true, for further search disclosed the remains of an oil cask that had been split up for firewood, and a broken ear-blade, stamped with the letters "P. of N."

Then it became certain to the minds of all that the lost ship had been that way, had landed a party at the hut and had probably taken away the hermit of the glacier, if he had been alive at that time.

With these discoveries they were forced to be content and returned to the ship, where the news produced much excitement.

Uncle Jabez resumed active command from that moment and seemed to recover his spirits very quickly, for the doctor at Upernavik had told him that his injuries were not serious, the ribs having united under the influence of generous diet and a good constitution before the Sarah Jane had cleared the pack ice, so that there was nothing but the weakness common to advanced age to hinder his rapid and complete recovery.

The old sailor at once ordered the ship's head to be cast out to sea and cruised along the edge of the ice, looking for an opening, while the look-out was relieved every hour to insure a vigilant watch.

They found, however, here at the entrance of Smith's Sound an obstacle with which they had not had to contend at Omenak's Fjord.

The current at the latter place had set the icebergs to the north, thus advancing them on their way, while at Smith's Sound the flow was decided and steady from the north. Great fleets of bergs and floes, miles in extent, were coming down in solemn procession into the North Water, going at the rate of two or three miles an hour.

During the period that they were tied up to the land ice these fields had advanced some little distance into the North Water, and as far as they could see to the north the view revealed nothing but one interminable field of ice studded with bergs of the largest size.

CHAPTER XV.

THE EARTHQUAKE.

REUBEN had gone up into the "crow's-nest," as the look-out station on an Arctic ship is christened. It was not the first time he had been there, and his companion was Folger, the mate, both being provided with good glasses.

The "crow's-nest" is always rigged up in Arctic vessels as soon as the ice comes in sight. A good look-out is indispensable if water-holes and leads are to be found, and the cold at such a lofty station makes some protection for the watcher imperatively necessary.

The "crow's-nest" on the Sarah Jane was lined with thick felt and well provided with buffalo-robés in which the look-out could swathe his limbs while he held his weary watch. This day, however, the furs were not necessary, for the temperature was quite comfortable, never reaching freezing point under the constant round of sunshine.

Folger had been scanning the distant ice procession for some time in silence, when Reuben said:

"Well, what do you think of it?"

"I'm afraid there ain't much chance for us this year," replied the mate, in a grave tone. "I never seen the ice so open as it was in the Middle Pack, but this here seems to be thicker 'n common. There ain't so much as a single lead 'cept at the outside, whar the does has got bruck off, scrapin' along the glacier."

"Then what in your opinion will be our prospects?" asked Reuben.

"I'm thinking, Master Rube, that this ice will keep on a-comin' for the next six weeks, which will bring us into September, and by that time it will begin to freeze up again and we'll have to go into winter-quarters and wait till next spring—if we ever git out."

"But what makes the ice come in from the north?" asked Reuben, thoughtfully. "It must be warm up there, or it would not break up."

"That's so, that's so. I don't know how 'tis, but I know it's so. There's allers be'n a current runnin' out of this sound, and where it comes from no one kin tell."

"I think I know, Folger."

"You! Du tell! Waal, and where do you think it comes from?"

"You know the Japan current?"

"You bet I do. Many's the time I've seen it in the Pacific. 'Tis as hot as the Gulf Stream only ten times as broad."

"Where does it go, Folger?"

"It sweeps up from Japan along the coast of Chaney, crosses over to Ameriky, and goes up through Behring's Straits. I've be'n there arter whales afor now."

"And what becomes of it then?"

"No man knows."

"Why shouldn't it go on, and after washin' the islands on the north coast of America come down here by Smith's Sound? Why not?"

"Waal," returned the mate, in a doubtful tone;

"it mout be so, and I ain't sayin' 'tain't, but all I knows is this: no man's be'n there yet to find out."

"Why do you say that, Folger? Are we not looking for such a man now? He must have passed through here, or we should find the remains of his ship."

"That's so again, but for all that, we may have to wait another year afor we git through this ice. Some years is better than others for ice, you know."

"We shall never have a better year than this, Folger. Now I'm going to propose something and I want you to help me with Uncle Jabez. I'm going to take Kalatoonaah and travel over that pack to the north to find an opening. We can go where the ship can't follow and we can find out whether there's any chance."

Reuben had got thus far, when he stopped suddenly and gazed on Folger, pale and startled.

The mate returned the look with equal amazement, and clutched at the side of the crow's-nest with both hands, dropping his glass.

They were out in open water, skirting the fields of ice, and yet the ship was trembling and groaning, her stout timbers quivering from stem to stern with a succession of jerking shocks, as if they had just struck on a rock and were scraping and grinding over it.

This strange motion increased every moment, while the wind died away and the sails flapped noisily against the masts.

"What is it, Folger?" asked the boy, hurriedly.

"I don't—don't know. Hold on for your life," answered the mate, as pale as a ghost; and then they heard cries on the deck below, with the hurried rush of feet, that showed the panic was spreading.

What had happened no one could tell. The trembling, jerking motion went on, and Reuben, looking over the side of the crow's-nest, saw the sea in violent commotion, little chopping waves wrinkling up the whole surface covering the water with white foam, as if the water were boiling.

Then they saw a huge green wave come rolling toward them from the open sea, and the quivering of the ship's timbers ceased. They heard Uncle Jabez yelling to the helmsman to "meet her quick!" and then away went the ship on the summit of the smooth wave, tossed about like a feather and driving in toward the ice, which lay about a mile off.

But along with the wave came a great gust of wind from the south, and Uncle Jabez, never at a loss for a seaman's shifts, called his demoralized crew to the braces and trimmed his sails to escape the imminent danger, while the great wave was seen to pass bodily through the midst of the ice pack, tossing the great bergs aside as easily as it had tossed the ship, and breaking the floes like so much thin glass.

Before they had time to notice the result of this commotion, the trembling and quivering began again, and once more everybody in the ship stood pale-faced, holding on to the nearest support to avoid a fall.

"What can it be, Folger?" again asked Reuben, who was turning sick at the stomach from this terrible shaking.

"I know now," was the half-whispered reply. "The wave told me that. It's an 'arthquake, Master Rube. The Lord be merciful to us all."

An earthquake!

But the trembling and jerking still went on without cessation, and no new wave came to threaten them. After a little of it, the crew of the Sarah Jane, finding that no ill effects followed the motion, began to look about them at the land and ice, to see how the earthquake was treating the more solid frame of the globe.

Reuben uttered a cry of amazement and pointed at the face of the great glacier. It was all cracked and piled up in irregular mountains of ice, with black rocks between them, and in more than one place a rushing stream of water was pouring down the rocks into the sea.

Then came a series of jerks and shocks each more violent than the last, and loud explosions were heard far to the north in the ice, while dark clouds began to rise from thence, hiding the ice-blink and veiling the sun from sight.

As soon as this happened, the darkness rapidly increased, and became so great that Reuben and Folger could see nothing around them. The outlines of the fore and mizzen-masts had vanished, while a sea of warm wet mist went surging past the crow's nest in dense clouds, impelled by gusts of air that felt quite warm.

Then they heard a low distant rumble that rapidly increased till it became unmistakable thunder, accompanied by the red flashes of equally unmistakable lightning.

"Waal, I swow," cried Folger, in a tone of great wonder, "thunder I never yet heard in these latitudes, but that's it, sure enough. Master Rube, say your prayers, for the end of the world's coming, sure."

Reuben made no answer. He was watching and listening. Presently he started violently. A dim figure had climbed up to the crow's nest and was gettin' over the edge.

"Who's that?" he cried, recoilin'.

"No tengo miedo mucho," replied a soft voice.

"Be not afraid, my boy. It is I."

The strange surroundings, the gloom and the unnatural look of everything were beginnin' to have their effect on the imagination of the boy. Reuben was beginnin' to tremble.

Dolores noticed it as she peered into his face in the dark mist, and she turned to Folger, pointing down to the deck.

"Go," she said, in her broken English. "Dey want you down dere. Capitano 'e say so. Go."

"All right, miss," replied the sailor, heartily. "Ef you say Cap. Coffin wants me, I'm agreeable; for sих a devil's dance as this I never seen afore, and I won't be sorry to be on deck again."

So saying, the worthy mate fel his way down the rigging, where he found everything buried in darkness, as much thicker as it was up in the crow's nest as it was possible to conceive. The little gusts of wind that he had noticed aloft were not to be felt on deck, and the vessel was drifting blindly about in a dense sea of dark mist, with her only consolation in the supposed set of the current out to the open sea.

The trembling of the water was becoming less violent, momentarily, but the roar of the thunder was fast increasing, and altogether they seemed to be quite powerless amid the war of the elements.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BOILING SEA.

It was at least twelve hours before the shocks which had been agitating sea and land around the Sarah Jane subsided into comparative quiet, and the ship lay rocking on a heavy ground swell in the midst of the same warm fog that had saluted them since the earthquake began.

The darkness had not diminished; it was, if anything, thicker than before; but the thunder and lightning had died away into quietness, and not a breath of air was stirring.

Uncle Jabez stood on the quarter-deck by the binacle, where the lamps had been lighted, looking at the compass with Folger and Jonathan. Mrs. Macy and Kate were near them, for an instinct of peril seemed to drive every one on deck, just as the dry-land people rush into the open air during an earthquake. All realized the peril they were passing through, and it was its very rarity in those latitudes that made it the more appalling. So great was the terror and the consequent selfishness engendered, that even the mother had forgotten to remark the absence of Reuben, while Dolores had not been missed from the deck.

Uncle Jabez looked haggard and anxious as he scanned the compass. The needle was wandering to and fro in a capricious, unsteady way that showed them the ship was drifting at the mercy of variable currents. Sometimes it would sweep slowly all round the compass bowl, indicating that an eddy was turning the ship helplessly round; at other times it shifted back and forth, a point at a time, showing that she was drifting in a serpentine course.

"If we could only git steerageway on her, I wouldn't mind so much, Zeke," observed the old man, to his first officer, "but I'm blamed if I kin tell where she's goin' now."

"S'pose we give her a heave of the lead, Cap," observed the mate. "I ain't much afeared but what we're in good water, but these currents is risky things."

The leadsman obeyed the order that sent him into the chains, and the great twenty-eight pound ingot of lead, armed with its tallow at the end, plunged sullenly into the sea.

Hardly five seconds elapsed before the man called out:

"Bottom, sir. Hold the lantern."

Uncle Jabez started violently as the report came back:

"By the mark, seven."

They were in seven fathoms only of water, and their last soundings had been in ninety-four.

"It's the 'arthquake, Cap," whispered the mate, confidently. "Don't skeer the wimmin folks. The crust of the 'arth has riz and I've known it to sink again. We're in the Lord's hands, Cap."

"Ay, ay," observed the old sailor, gravely; "you say true, Zek'l. He knows whar we're going, ef we don't. Lord help us all and keep us from harm."

The lead was brought on board and they examined the end, which was covered with coarse sand and shells. Folger looked at it curiously and then passed his hand along the wet line, sweeping off some of the sea-water.

"Look ahere, Cap," he said, in a tone of interest. "Here's a curious thing. Feel this line."

Uncle Jabez mechanically imitated the mate's example and uttered a short exclamation of wonder:

"It's warm!"

Folger nodded and went down to the cabin from whence he soon returned with a long thermometer fastened to a fish-line.

He held it close to the binnacle lamp and read out the figures:

"Sixty-eight degrees, Cap, and we was down at forty-two this morning. Let's see what she says in the water."

He let down the instrument over the side of the ship, when Mrs. Macy, who had been sitting on the taffrail in a sort of dreamy state of terror, came forward and asked:

"What is it, Jabez? What have you found? Any new danger?"

"Nothin' to be skeered on, Sally. Nothin' but warm water. Whar's Rube now? Young flosy ought to be able to tell us about this."

The old sailor tried to put on a cheerful air, but it was forced. His own philosophy was giving way under his strange surroundings.

Presently Folger pulled in the thermometer and uttered a cry of surprise, for the instrument nearly scalded his fingers.

"A hundred and fifty-seven, by the holy poker!" he ejaculated. "Why, Cap, the water's a'most a'b'ilin'!"

While they were yet in the full flush of excitement consequent on this discovery, Reuben came slowly down the rigging, followed by Dolores, and the first words he uttered were addressed to his uncle.

"Uncle Jabez," he cried, "I've found out what's the matter. It's no miracle at all. We shall be in the open sea in twelve hours, or I am much mistaken."

CHAPTER XVII.

AWAY NORTH.

REUBEN looked tired and haggard from the unusual strain on his boyish nerves, but there was a triumphant light in his eye.

"I've found out what's the matter, uncle. There's a volcano in eruption near us."

"A what?" asked the old sailor. "Who ever heard of volcanoes in these parts? Why, the ice would freeze 'em out."

"Why, uncle, did you never hear of Mount Hecla in Iceland?" asked the boy, triumphantly. "Don't you know that the Fox Islands in Behring's Straits are all extinct volcanoes? The wonder is that I never thought of it before. It explains everything. The volcano has made an earthquake, and the earthquake made the wave. Don't you remember the great earthquake at Arica in South America? The crust of the earth sunk and a great wave came tearing ships from their anchors and carrying one American frigate three miles inland. Then the crust rose again and the wave went back, leaving the ship high and dry in a forest. This acts just the same way, uncle."

"Waal," replied the old captain, cautiously, "you may be right and you may be wrong. L'arnin's a great thing, Rube, but all we kin do, with all our Farnin', is to wait till the sun comes out again."

So they waited for the sun.

It was a long time coming. Hour after hour stole by and no change was visible. The anchor was dropped to prevent any dangers in drifting, the sails were hoisted and furled, and there lay the ship in the midst of the hot sea, all swathed in vapor.

They soon found, from the way in which she rode to her anchor, that the current was coming pretty steadily from the north, and as time went on and they cast the thermometer in again and again, the mercury indicated a rapid fall of temperature.

From being a hundred and sixty at one time, it sunk to a hundred in about four hours, and then remained stationary for another four, when it sunk all on a sudden in fifteen minutes to seventy degrees, where it again stopped.

This increase of cold was soon perceptible in the air. Those who had been stripping off their outer clothes and walking about in shirt-sleeves began to put on their jackets again, while the mist condensed and came dripping down in streams from every yard and rope overhead.

The darkness grew thicker and thicker as the temperature fell, and the mist turned into regular torrents of rain, quite warm, which washed their decks thoroughly.

Then came a low sighing murmur in the rigging, and Folger remarked:

"Here comes the wind at last. Now if we only could see a little, we'd be all right."

As if in answer to his prayer, a dull red globe made its appearance in the fog overhead, and a shout of joy went up as the belated sailors recognized the sun at last.

It was but a sickly sun to be sure, and it vanished almost immediately as fresh clouds of vapor swept across it; but it was the sun, and they had seen it. The rapid sweep of the clouds over its face showed them that there was wind aloft, and very soon it was felt on deck, and seen, too, as it drove the fog wildly over the heaving swell, careering through the rigging.

As the wind rose, the light also rose. The black fog changed to dark gray, then to light gray, and finally to white, while the red globe of the sun made itself visible again and again, till it shone uninterrupted through the white waves of vapor.

Thinner and thinner grew the haze, till they could see the heave of the waves for several hundred yards round the vessel, and then came a loud whistling in the rigging as the breeze became a smart gale, when the fog rolled away to the south in a great cloud, revealing to the astonished watchers the blue sky, the bright sun, and a wonderful panorama all round them.

A simultaneous cry of wonder burst from every one on deck.

When the mist closed in on them, after the earthquake about sixteen hours before, the whole northern horizon was full of field-ice and bergs starting from the grand sweep of Humboldt Glacier, and barring their way as with a wall of iron.

Now, what a change!

The field-ice had vanished, and a great expanse of black water stretched out to the north, studded with icebergs, not one of which seemed to be at rest. Wherever they looked the great ice-mountains were toppling over and over in the water, sinking first on one side and then on the other, each bathed in a luminous halo of condensing vapor, as the mist of the warm water met their cold surfaces.

The great smooth sweep of the glacier had vanished, to be replaced by rugged masses of ice, alternated with long stretches of black rock, and here and there the line of the coast seemed to have been raised into swells, while at other points it had sunk into valleys, down which torrents of turbid water were rushing to the sea.

The change was so sudden and vast, that, although something of the kind had been looked for, the actual fact took them by surprise.

Folger was the first to comment on the change in a manner that showed practical sense.

"Cap," he said, briskly, "the Sound's open and we're safe in seven fathoms of water. Tain't for me to say what's to be done, but I'll jest ax—have you any orders for me?"

Uncle Jabez smiled.

"All hands up anchor and make sail, Mr. Folger," he said, in a cheerful tone. "Keep the lead going, and stand on as far as the ice will let us."

Hardly were the words out of his mouth, when the stentorian voice of the mate started the cry:

"All hands! All hands up anchor, and make sail! Man the capstan bars, there! Lively, boys, lively! Stand by to go aloft! Way aloft!"

The change from silence and expectation to bustle and activity was immediate under the influence of his inspiring voice, and within half an hour the Sarah Jane was running rapidly through the open water of Smith's Sound, tacking among the icebergs, and making her way at the rate of seven or eight knots an hour to the north.

Their progress was by no means unattended by peril. The field ice had vanished but the bergs were in unusual profusion, and these monsters of the deep were constantly rocking to and fro, raising quite a heavy sea as they careered before the fresh north wind. The temperature of the water rapidly fell as they advanced into the vicinity of these masses of ice till it reached the normal temperature of the Arctic Ocean in summer, only a few degrees above freezing point and still the ship pressed on under the bright rays of the summer sun of the Pole, that never sets till it disappears for six months.

Hour after hour they pressed on and still the bergs grew thicker and thicker, while the ominous ice-blink made its appearance once more on the northern horizon.

The sweep of Humboldt glacier began to show itself on the right hand whenever their course carried them in that direction near the land, and they began to realize that the center of the volcanic action, powerful as it had been, had after all produced but a small effect on the vast masses of ice that gird the Pole with their rigid zone.

The lead, however, revealed one encouraging fact. The water was deepening fast as they advanced and they ceased to feel their way by its use after they had attained a minimum of a hundred fathoms.

The chronometers showed them that they had been running along in this way for forty-eight

hours, and Folger had just been working out the ship's position by dead-reckoning, showing that they had attained the unprecedented north latitude of eighty-four degrees when they began to see small lumps of field-ice floating in the water.

The texture of these waifs was soft and spongy, water-soaked and rotten to the touch, and they parted in small fragments as the ship sped on, but none the less they increased in number and size as the Sarah Jane advanced, till a great flock made its appearance holding several bergs in its embrace and bordered with some half a mile of brash ice through which the waves undulated with an oily swell.

"We ain't out of the ice yet, Cap," observed Folger, thoughtfully, when he saw this. "That 'arthquake gave us quite a lift, but it ain't killed the ice by a good deal."

Uncle Jabez, who had been pacing the quarter-deck full of hope and cheerfulness all the time they were beating up the Sound, looked at the ice and then at the sky.

"We've come this far safe, Zek'l," he observed, brightly, "and we're going through if the Lord lets us. I ain't going back now till I hears or sees something of Jon'than."

"That's right, Cap," responded the mate, heartily. "I'm with ye all the time, but I don't put so much faith in the volcano as the rest of ye seem to do. That's all. Look at the blink."

He pointed ahead where the bright yellow glare of the ice-blink covered all the horizon, while a line of white peaks gleaming in the sun was slowly rising from the bosom of the sea, stretched right across their path.

"That don't look much like goin' further, Cap," he observed. "That's land, and land that no white man has ever visited, I guess."

"Well, then, we shall be the first to see it, Zek'l, and we'll name it 'Macy Land,' arter Jon'than. How's that, shipmate? Old Nantuck will be ahead of all of their fine scientific expeditions then."

"Waal, Cap, as for that I wouldn't keer so much about diskiverin' strange lands as I would to see Cap Macy onst more alive and hearty, and that's what I fear we'll never do. We've got up here this far, but as for gettin' back again, we won't do that this year; you mark my words about that."

And Folger went forward to look after the men and con the ship through the now rapidly-increasing ice.

As the mate had predicted, their troubles were by no means over. Not only was the floating ice thicker, and the temperature of the air had fallen and was still falling, while the character of the ice had changed.

That which they came on now was hard and firm and the leads were few and not so wide as formerly. The white peaks on the horizon rose rapidly into view, disclosing themselves as a chain of mountains covered with glaciers which stretched down into a wilderness of field-ice studded with bergs, and the Sarah Jane was at last compelled to lower her sails and bring up at the edge of this vast field, planting an ice-anchor for security, and faced by the unwelcome fact that some ten miles of solid land-ice lay between them and any further progress.

The wind came down over this white waste with piercing chill and the contrast between their present and past condition made the temperature doubly severe on them.

The thermometer marked only fifteen degrees above zero in the shade, rising to twenty-eight in the full rays of the sun, and they began to realize the influence that a mass of land always has on the weather as contrasted with the equability of open sea.

The anchorage of the Sarah Jane after her long run through the open channel had its effect on her passengers. Mrs. Macy had gone below to watch over Reuben who had fallen into a deep sleep after the earthquake shocks, and saw that the boy was stirring as the cold increased. Pretty soon he woke up and stared around him, asking where they were.

His mother noticed that he looked unusually bright and healthy, and had evidently forgotten all about the terrible scenes attending the volcanic eruption and earthquake, for the first question he asked after the usual "Where are we now?" was whether the ice was opening yet.

Dolores, who also had been hidden in her stateroom as long as the ship was gliding smoothly along made her appearance in the cabin just as Reuben insisted on coming on deck, and Kate Macy followed the rest into the open air, keeping away from the Spanish girl, who seemed to have resumed her close Esquimaux dress for good now.

As there was clearly nothing to be done for some hours in getting the ship forward, the whole company fortified their spirits with a hot breakfast, the first regular meal taken since the Sarah Jane first brought up in front of Humboldt Glacier.

They had passed entirely out of sight of this monument of the frost by this time, and all to the south-east, south and south-west was still open water, over which the dark mists hung, while the ice and ice-blink lay like a bright wall barring their further progress to the north.

After breakfast, they got up the anchor, stood out to sea and began to run along the icy coast to the east.

It was under Folger's advice that this move was made, for as the mate very sensibly said:

"If we can't git through one way, we kin another, and this here land don't go all round the world. It's an island of some kind, if a big one."

Reuben, who seemed to have recovered all his old spirits and energy, was full of enthusiasm as they coasted the shores of this unknown land. As Uncle Jabez had suggested, it was christened Macy Island, while the most prominent peak in sight received the

name of Mount Coffin in honor of the captain himself. As for Folger, he was rewarded for his services in the cause of science by the honor of giving a name to the first projection of the coast, and Reuben plotted out Cape Folger on the chart in latitude $84^{\circ} 30'$ north, longitude $73^{\circ} 47'$ west from Greenwich. With the resumption of movement in the ship the spirits of all rose, and so they dashed along to the east under a nipping northern breeze, the sea covered with fragments of land ice broken off by the action of the water, but with no serious impediment to their progress.

Reuben was full of enthusiasm at the actual certainty that they were traversing new and unknown lands; Jonathan and his mother were cheered by the thought that they were approaching the spot where father and husband were to be found; and Dolores watched the coast with eager eyes, as if expecting at every turn to see some mark of the presence of one whom she had mourned as dead for eight long years.

Even Uncle Jabez was bitten with the prevailing fever of discovery and adventure, for there was something peculiarly fascinating in the way they were cruising about in these waters, never before traversed, so far as they knew, by civilized man, if, indeed, the Pride of Nantucket had ever got so far uninjured.

Kate Macy alone looked gloomy, and that was easily explained by the fact that her cousins were too much preoccupied to notice and spoil her as usual.

So they sailed along, skirting the unknown shores of Macy Land, till a dark cloud made its appearance far on the eastern horizon, and Folger joyfully cried:

"The water sky again! We kin git through! By the holy poker, it seems as if there were an open Polar Sea, arter all, Cap."

The cry attracted the attention of all on deck, and they crowded to the bows looking ahead.

There they could see a low, dark bank of clouds; the well-known and welcome "water sky" stretching up from the open sea to the south right across their path about ten miles ahead and hanging black behind the sharply-defined peak of a lofty mountain capped with ice.

Behind this dark cloud they could see half-veiled in the mist at its foot the faint outlines of another peak, how far away they could not tell, but that it was far higher than the one in full view they could easily see. The water-clouds were then the harbingers of a strait.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE UNKNOWN LAND.

Yes; there was no doubt that a strait lay before them, dividing the icy peaks of Macy Land from the still more lofty summits of another country, equally unknown.

As they swept along under the bright, never-ceasing sunlight, every glass in the ship was eagerly turned to the shore, searching for signs of human or animal nature, but all in vain. The land rose up in precipitous bluffs of gray rock, so sheer in many places that neither snow nor ice could cling to them; and from these bluffs rose again lofty conical peaks of volcanic outline, ending in dazzling cones of snow and ice, glittering so brightly that the eye could not bear the sight.

Not a shrub or tree, not a shred of moss, was to be seen anywhere. Gray and black rocks and white snow united to form an unrelieved panorama of desolation, where there was neither bird nor beast to break the monotony of white.

The gulls and auks, the seals and divers, the bears and walruses that had enlivened the borders of the Middle Ice, seemed all to have vanished; and not a fish jumped out of the dark waters that washed the ice-bound shore. They had seen multitudes of dead fish, seals and walruses in coming up Smith Sound, but that sight had been easily explained.

The terrible volcanic convulsion and sudden beating of the water had killed even the whales there, and no one had wondered at it.

But here it was pretty clear that the convulsions of nature had not disturbed the perpetual monotony of the ice kingdom, and the absence of animal life was not so easily accounted for.

It produced a depressing effect on Folger in particular, who observed thoughtfully to Reuben:

"It don't look as if any human critters as got here could find much to live on, does it? I'm afeared we hain't much chance of findin' the Pride's people alive."

Reuben was searching the dark cloud-bank with the glass as the mate spoke, and he laid down the telescope to reply:

"We're only on one side of the land yet, Folger. Who knows what's on the other side? I have a theory that we shall find living creatures as soon as we get into that dark water. It must be warmer than this, or there would not be so much vapor rising from it."

Uncle Jabez heard the remark and addressed his nephew with a respect that had been growing ever since the boy had returned to them.

The fact was that so many strange things had happened lately that the old sailor's experience was quite at fault, and he began to turn to Rube's "larn'g" for a possible explanation.

"Waal, young flosofy," he observed; "tell us what your theory, as you call it, may be. It's as good as anything in these latitudes, cause no one kin contradict you."

Reuben reddened a little and replied:

"It's only a theory, and we shall soon find if it's correct; but I have a suspicion that we have reached the Open Polar Sea which Hayes fancied he saw in his last expedition. This land in front of us is

evidently only an island, and that is the reason the ice clings to it."

"But if it's land, why ain't there any livin' creature?" asked Uncle Jabez, obstinately. "There's no seals and gulls everywhere else."

"We are on the south side of the land," said Reuben, quietly. "Look at the shadow, uncle. It falls toward us and the sun is on the other side of the mountains. We are on the night side of the earth, and this face of the hills gets only half as much sun as the other or I am much mistaken. However, we shall—"

Down from the crow's-nest came a long quavering cry, interrupting the colloquy. It was the well-known signal, dear to the whaler:

"THERE SHE BLOWS!"

Uncle Jabez started like a war-horse at the sound of the trumpet, and shouted back:

"Where away?"

"Dead ahead, sir," was the prompt reply. "A whole school of 'em in the fog."

A general rush to the rail to see, and there were the little white jets of spray at the edge of the dark water-clouds, toward which the Sarah Jane was dashing at the rate of eight knots an hour, with all sail set and the wind abeam.

All was again joyful excitement at the prospect of a return to animated Nature after the sterile monotony of the cliffs of Macy Land. The whales were in plain sight, not three miles off, and seemed to be in very large numbers, spouting and leaping as at play.

Behind them were the dark mists of the water-clouds, and away into the sky for a background towered the great icy peak which had first attracted their attention. On went the Sarah Jane through that unknown and mysterious sea, and at last began to turn the shoulder of the last cape of Macy Land, revealing the fact that they were coming to a strait of open water of very remarkable width.

Considering the height of the peak on the other side, they had judged the opening to be at the utmost four or five miles wide, but the further they sailed round the end of Macy Land the wider seemed the expanse of open water, till the conviction forced itself on their minds that they were entering a channel at least as wide as the Straits of Dover—say twenty-five miles—and that the peak they saw must be one of the tallest mountains in the world.

Reuben, who was nothing if not scientific, brought out his sextant and took its altitude as they went along, every two minutes, making a rough calculation as he went, and estimating it at thirty-five thousand feet.

"Six thousand more than the biggest of the Himalayas, uncle," he said, "if I haven't made a mistake in my figures, and as big as the biggest, anyhow. What shall we call it?"

"Call it Monte Katrina," said a soft voice at his elbow, and there stood Dolores, gazing at the mountain with a smile. "She eez leetel, but she is goot. Shall we not call it dat?"

She turned with a winning smile to Kate, who was hovering near by under the wing of Uncle Jabez; and the suggestion was adopted with acclamation, so that the hot-tempered little heroine had no further excuse for sulking, and from that moment began to look more favorably on the Spanish stranger, come to them in so remarkable a manner.

But meantime the good ship swept bravely on her course to the eastward, till she had cleared the cape, and then trimmed her sails flat and stretched away to the north-east, making for the foot of Monte Katrina through the mist.

As they advanced, the whole of the sea seemed to be alive with whales, spouting round them, not by hundreds, but literally by thousands; while the vapor which had looked so thick in the distance diminished when they were in it to a thin haze.

"They whales ain't never been hunted," observed Folger, as one huge monster leaped clear out of the water like a salmon, so close to the ship that the spray flew over the quarter. "Don't look yet as if any one lived here, Cap; for what man could see them critters jumpin' without talkin' one, if so be he had a harpoon? See how tame they be."

Indeed it seemed as if the whales looked on the ship as something of their own kind, for they came gamboling up alongside, and more than once the cutwater struck one of the unwieldy monsters on the back as it lazily crossed their bows.

However, all this did not impede the progress of the Sarah Jane, as she stood on under the cliffs of Mount Katrina, without a speck of ice visible on the water.

A thermometer let over the side showed a temperature of seventy degrees, while a strong current was evidently setting out of the strait to the south. The nearer they came to the slopes of Monte Katrina the taller it looked, and then they began to see that the snow and ice of the peak no longer came down to the sea level in the strait. There was a great ice foot stretching out into the sea they had just left, but it ended in a well-defined glacier edge about three miles up the strait, to be succeeded by dark cliffs with a bank at the bottom, coming down to the water in a beach of white sand, bordered by the first green that any of them had seen since leaving Omenak's Fjord.

It was unmistakable green, dark and velvety, at first a mere thread, but growing broader as the coast trended away to the north; and with a glass one might distinguish actual shrubs and grasses, among the usual profusion of Arctic mosses.

Now indeed the excitement was reaching fever heat, on board the ship. Uncle Jabez was as crazy as the rest, and declared that for his part he didn't care whether the winter locked them up there for good or not; he was going to stay.

On went the Sarah Jane, and the further they advanced the warmer grew the north wind. It seemed

strange to them, but nevertheless they found that ever since they had left the south side of Macy Land it had been growing warmer, and that on the whole they had been approaching a milder climate all the way from the edge of the Middle Ice in Baffin's Bay.

Within three hours from the time they entered the strait, they were close enough to hear the surf rolling on the beach at the foot of Monte Katrina, to see the mosses and flowers, with a few small birch trees about a yard high, and to smell the perfume of the gentians, saxifrage and primroses that carpeted the foot of the rocks.

It was quite a trial to be compelled to leave this prospect for a while, but the water was shoaling so rapidly that it became necessary.

With their advent into these unknown seas they came upon another mark that they had passed the limit of ice-action. The water, which had hitherto been turbid and muddy, from the berg deposits, had now become as clear as crystal, and they could count the shells and pebbles on the bottom, as they looked over the side of the ship, where the lead showed fifteen fathoms of water. The breeze, which had been so brisk at first, roughening the water considerably, had sunk to a warm and gentle gale, under which the ship glided slowly along, and the Sarah Jane hauled her tacks and stood off from the foot of Monte Katrina, making another long stretch over to Macy Land.

Thinner and thinner now grew the haze, as the temperature of air and water became more equable, till they could see from shore to shore of the strait with no more difficulty than one has on the Jersey coast in the warm, misty Indian summer.

Then it became plain that they had entered either some very deep bay or strait, which narrowed rapidly toward the north, for all the horizon ahead of them was occupied by a line of blue mountains, in which no gap appeared.

But no longer had the hills the forbidding aspect that had met them on the south side of Macy Land. There was snow on the summits, but all below was dark, and the profusion of animal life around them kept pace in its increase with the wealth of plants and flowers.

Besides the whales, there were seals, sporting in all directions, and a quantity of sea lions, animals that are never found in the vicinity of ice, while the walruses had disappeared, and there were no signs of Polar bears.

As for the birds, they could see ducks and geese, auks and divers, gulls of all kinds, finches and swallows, nestling in the cliffs at the foot of Monte Katrina and circling in vast flocks. The great white falcon of Iceland, the osprey and the bald eagle soared lazily overhead, as if too well fed to care about hunting much; and the omnipresent crows were cawing everywhere.

On sailed the Sarah Jane toward the cliffs of Macy Land, that had looked so sterile from the south, and behold! their looks also had changed. Either they had gone further up the sheltered bay, or the aspect of the cliffs was more favorable to life, for when they came close they perceived a grove of birch trees, fringed with willows, rising higher than a man's head, while the mosses were giving way to the purple heaths of the sub-arctic zones.

Still they kept on up this bay of wonders, stemming a current that was running about three miles an hour, and once more the shoaling water warned them to tack.

On they went up the bay, which had now narrowed to less than five miles, while the mountains on either side towered up as if they would shut out the sky, and the water became smooth and glassy.

The wind had sunk to a mere cat's-paw as they came more and more under the lee of the mountain, and at last it became plain that they could no longer stem the current, which was carrying them astern all the time.

Under these circumstances Uncle Jabez dropped his anchor close to Monte Katrina and ordered out the boats.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GIANTS' PASS.

The order to man the boats was greeted with a hearty cheer, and it seemed very likely that the ship would be left tenantless, had not Uncle Jabez designated an anchor-watch, and announced that only three boats would be allowed to leave the ship.

There was a good deal of grumbling, for sailors are like children, and the sight of the green shores and groves of trees that were near them, albeit so small, sent them nearly frantic to get to land. However, the discipline of the Sarah Jane had returned to its normal state since Captain Coffin had recovered somewhat of his health, and the grumblers held their peace and stayed on board.

But long before the boats could be put out, Reuben had jumped into his kayak, and was skimming away up the silent bay, followed by Dolores, with Kalatoonaah a bad third in the race.

It must be said in excuse for the laziness of the Esquimaux, that since he had been on board the Sarah Jane he had enjoyed something that had never before come to his experience. This was an unvaried succession of square meals.

The rule of his life up to that time had been a feast and a famine; a gorgie of seal meat for three days and a fast of three weeks, alternating with rations of burnt seal hide in the winter, while the summer living, though more plentiful, was almost equally varied.

The unusual experience of getting plenty to eat for the asking had been too much for Kalatoonaah, who had acquired the demoralizing habit of eating whatever he could get. His life on board the Sarah Jane had therefore been a succession of gorgies on seal meat and walrus, which no one else would touch,

and the happy Hosky had only desisted from eating to go to sleep, and had only wakened to gorge afresh. Therefore, when Kalatoonah found himself kicked out of the lee-scuppers and ordered by Dolores to get into his kayak and follow her, he did so with a bewilderment arising from excessive sleep and overmuch eating, and probably would have declined altogether, had not some one thrown the last remnant of seal overboard while the Hosky was sleeping peacefully beside it, dreaming of more gorges.

When there was no more seal, the natural workings of Kalatoonah's mind impelled him to his kayak after fresh victims, and it was not until he was fairly in his boat and paddling sleepily away that he began to realize that he was no longer in Disco Bay, but in an unknown country.

The stolid nature of the man, and his dazed condition owing to overmuch seal meat, prevented him from saying anything; but he paddled away after Reuben and Dolores with many wise reflections in his mind, among which the uppermost was that in such a country the seals must be tame, as indeed they were.

Reuben and Dolores skinned on under the rocks of Monte Katrina, about half a mile ahead of the whale-boats.

The further they advanced the narrower grew the bay, but they could see that a spur of Monte Katrina was outlined against the cliffs of Macy Land in a way that showed a passage between the two, curving round to the left.

As they approached this passage the birches and willows grew taller, and they began to notice the dark foliage of stunted fir-trees, sure marks of a more temperate climate, such as exists in the latitudes of Norway and Labrador.

"Is not this a river we are entering, Don Ruben?" asked Dolores, with some curiosity, as they came nearer and nearer.

"I hardly think so," was the answer. "A river always brings mud with it and here the water is so clear that one can see the bottom at almost any depth."

"Then what makes this swift current?"

"I fancy it must be the tide," was the reply. "If you look at the shore you will see that there is a high-water mark just above where the stream runs most fiercely round the rocks."

She made no more remarks, but paddled on till they had turned the shoulder of the spur and then an exclamation of surprise and wonder broke from her lips.

"Oh, Don Ruben, see how grand!"

Both by one instinct stopped paddling and gazed, while even stupid Kalatoonah, as he glided up beside them, stared in blank amazement at a scene such as had never greeted his eyes before.

The passage which they had expected was there, curving round till it was lost in the land, and narrowed to an expanse of about five hundred yards, while perpendicular cliffs of black basalt, arranged in columns as regular as if chiseled by the hand of man, lined the passage on either side.

The water was as smooth as glass, gliding by the foot of these grim walls with an oily flow, but nevertheless there were proofs of its fiercer action at other times, in the presence of a number of black caverns, with which the foot of the cliffs was honeycombed.

Clouds of blue rock-pigeons were fluttering from cliff to cliff from these caverns and the crevices between the columns above, showing that they were rising still another scale in the ladder of animated nature; for the rock-dove is not found north of the Arctic Circle, and seldom ventures in that vicinity in a very warm summer.

There was something in the sheer sweep of these precipices of black rock, towering up six or seven thousand feet in the air, that was inexpressibly sublime.

The broad strait beneath them sunk by comparison to tiny rivulet and the human beings in their boats felt as if they had diminished to the proportions of musketoes.

While they were gazing came the dash of oars and the three whale-boats swept into the silent bay, when as if by one consent the men stopped rowing and turned in their seats to gaze with awe-stricken faces at this sublime gateway into the unknown scenes of the north.

Uncle Jabez was the first to recover himself, and his voice was unusually low and quiet in tone as he said:

"Give way, boys, give way. There's more to see, yet. We've got there at last."

His words broke the spell of awe and renewed the excitement as the men sprung to their oars with a will and dashed on; but it was noticeable that there was no cheering and loud conversation.

There was something in the sublime loneliness and grandeur of this Pass of Giants that hushed the boldest among them, and the thunder of the oars in the rowlocks magnified by the echoes into a deafening din rendered conversation impossible.

The birds, frightened by the intrusion, came whirling out of the caves and crevices in dense clouds, and circled overhead in such numbers as to darken the air.

Within that pass the sun never shone, and yet the air was as mild and temperate as on an early spring day in Pennsylvania, so that the rowers were already sweating heavily.

On went the boats and canoes in a little fleet close together following this singular passage for over three miles as it wound to and fro between the never-ceasing walls of basalt, till Reuben, looking ahead, saw a broad blue shaft of light, coming down into the gloom of the chasm some distance ahead, and realized that there must be a gap in the mountains above that place.

He plied his paddle faster, and the light canoes

once more drew ahead of the heavier whale-boats till they saw that the blue shaft of light struck the cliff on the east side of the chasm near the foot, making a bright yellow patch on the rocks.

A little further on he could see the perpendicular cliffs ending in a gradual slope as the mountain-side came down to meet them covered with dark verdure and a heavy growth of pine trees.

This spot was still a mile off, but the glitter of sunlight on moving water told that the passage was opening, and the first breaths of a warm and pleasant breeze began to fan his cheek.

Pretty soon, as he glided on, he heard a loud cheering behind him which showed that the men in the boats had caught the same sight and that their spirits were rising from the reaction after the solemn gloom of the Giants' Pass, as Reuben had mentally named it by an unconquerable instinct.

On swept boats and canoes, every turn of this strange avenue revealing fresh beauties, all the more admired from their contrast to the wilderness of snow and ice from which they had lately emerged.

Now the passage widened to nearly a mile, while the pine forests came down to the edge of a sandy beach on which a gentle surf was breaking, while the sun overhead shone down on them with a power that fairly amazed them.

Reuben threw off first his hood, then his bird-skin "jumper," till he found himself paddling along in his undershirt, with bare arms and chest, the sweat pouring off his whole body.

Kalatoonah and Dolores were equally inconvenienced by the heat while the crews of the boats were rowing away in the scant costume of a sailor in the tropics.

The pace was growing too hot for the weather, and with one accord the canoeists stopped to stow away their heavy garments and give the boats time to come up, when all rested on their oars to admire the prospect and compare notes.

"Seems to me," observed Folger, from the stern sheets of his boat, "that we're a-coming nigh the sea again, Cap. This strait's gittin' wider all the time. Whar on 'arth kin we be, and whar nev' the Pride's people got to, ef they ever got this far?"

"If they came as far as this, I should say they must have gone on further, or they would have been greater fools than we are," observed Kitty Macy, who had recovered her spirits and some of her pertness under the compliment of being chosen godmother to the tallest mountaintop in the world. "If uncle Jonathan ever came here, we shall find him further on, for who would have stopped when they could have gone on forever?"

"Sensibly said, monkey," observed Uncle Jabez, patting her head as she sat beside him in his boat. "If the Pride ever reached here she went on to the sea beyond. I guess we kin do the same when the tide turns."

While they were thus chatting idly, Dolores, who had said but little since they entered the strait, was gazing ahead toward the bright waters that sparkled in the sun. Now, on a sudden, she uttered an eager cry.

"Mira! Mira! Un navio! Mira los velas!"

"Look! Look! A ship! See the sails!"

Instantly every one was turning round to look, and most had sprung up in their haste.

Over the tops of the fir trees, behind a point about a mile ahead, they could see the outline of a white sail with a long, fluttering streamer above, gliding out to the end of the point.

While they were still wondering what it could be, and exchanging hurried exclamations on the subject, the strange sail cleared the point and swept out into the open water, in full view.

CHAPTER XX. THE SEA ROVERS.

"GEEREWSALEM! what's that?" was the startled ejaculation of Uncle Jabez, the moment he saw the vessel, fairly. "Tain't no Christian craft, boys, They're savages! Git down to your oars."

In fact, the strange ship bore no resemblance to any craft that the sailors of the Sarah Jane had ever seen before, and had a decidedly barbarous look.

She did not seem to be over sixty or seventy feet long, and her bow and stern curved up out of the water in a strange, outlandish fashion, the bow terminating in a huge dragon's head, with open jaws, while the stern was recurved into the likeness of a fishtail, giving the whole boat the aspect of some curious marine monster.

Right in the midst of this queer concern was planted a tall mast, with a square sail reaching about half-way up, surmounted by a flag half as big as the sail, and a long, trailing pennant above that again.

The color of the boat was black, but the dragon's head and fishtail seemed to be gilded or covered with some shining metal, for they glittered brightly in the sun.

The flag seemed to be scarlet, with some device in black in the center, and the vessel was crowded with glittering figures of men.

She moved quite slowly, for her bows were very round and full, and she cast a great wave in front of her prow.

"Waa, Cap, did you ever!" cried Folger at last, in tones of great wonder. "So there's people lives up here, arter all. What kin they be?"

Uncle Jabez made no answer as he watched the strange ship. He was not only puzzled but alarmed; and his superstition began to return.

The boats lay idly on the water, but as if by one consent the men had settled themselves to their oars and sat waiting the word to pull away, for there was something in the aspect of the stranger that was vaguely disquieting.

On glided the unknown craft till it was fairly in

the open water, and no notice seemed yet to be taken of their presence.

Reuben had brought his glass with him and was narrowly watching the vessel. He could see the forms of the men on board, and counted some seventy or eighty, crowded together in that little craft, before he gave up the attempt and computed that she must hold at least a hundred.

The glittering appearance he could distinguish to be the gleam of helmets, shields, spears and other weapons, but he could not tell at that distance the features of the men.

Presently there was a commotion on the decks, and he saw a figure start up and climb up on the head of the dragon at the prow, pointing at the boats.

There was a bustle that showed they had been seen at last, and then down the wind floated the hoarse bray of some sort of trumpet.

The strange ship turned round and headed directly toward them before the wind, her great square sail bellying out like a bag, and Reuben noticed that she had no rudder, but was steered with two huge oars, like a Roman galley.

"Give way, boys," said Uncle Jabez at this moment. "Them fellers is savages, and we've got to git back to the ship; or mebbe we'll all be eaten up alive."

The sailors needed no second word, for there was something in the outlandish appearance of the strange vessel that had already frightened them pretty badly, and now the trumpets were braying and they could distinctly hear hoarse shouts that boded no good to the intruders on this wonderful Polar kingdom.

Reuben and Dolores did not seem to be so much frightened, though Kalatoonah turned as white as a sheet when he heard the cries and saw the strange ship bearing down on them.

The girl was so absorbed in her anxiety to find her father in this Northern Land that she seemed to be hardly accessible to fear, and Reuben felt that so long as the strangers remained in their bluff tub of a vessel he could play round them in his kayak with comparative safety. They could never catch him.

Thus it happened that within five minutes after the first discovery of the strangers, the three whale-boats, accompanied by Kalatoonah, were making their way back to the Sarah Jane, the men doing their best and all well frightened; while Dolores and Reuben were skimming in toward the land, crossing the track of this singular-looking craft and awaiting its nearer approach.

It came on with more rapidity than Reuben could have deemed possible, and he could see that the powerful crew had thrust out long oars from the side and were pulling lustily away, piling the foam up under the swelling bows in a white hill.

The trumpet kept on blowing at intervals, and he could hear hoarse, deep-toned voices shouting out all sorts of confused cries. The boy began to realize that the approaching strangers were wild and ferocious men of a very different race from the barbarous Esquimaux; for the voices of the latter, when they indulge in war-cries, always tend to shrill yell-like the Indians of whom they are an offshoot, while the shouts of these men were deep and strong, like those of Europeans.

Still, with the natural tremor that these savage cries caused him, there was mingled an overwhelming sense of wonder and curiosity, a fascination not devoid of admiration, that seemed to compel him to go nearer to these terrible warriors, to find what manner of men they were. Besides all this there was coming into his mind a vague sense that he had seen them before in some unknown past—where he could not tell—and he longed to solve the mystery.

As for Dolores, she skinned along by his side watching the strange vessel with a gaze that beokened more wonder and pleasure than fear, and her great dark eyes never left the figure on the prow.

In about ten minutes from the time when the strange vessel hove in sight, the boats of the Sarah Jane had vanished in the direction of the Giant's Pass and Reuben and Dolores were in the dark reflection of the pine woods close to the shore, while the black craft was close to them, passing abreast.

The men on board did not seem to be bestowing much attention on the tiny kayaks, though a few heads were turned their way; but they continued to row on in pursuit of the boats that had just disappeared.

Thus the two occupants of the canoes had a full and undisturbed view of the strange craft and its still stranger crew.

Reuben could hardly keep from a cry of admiration as they passed and Dolores exclaimed:

"Oh, Dios, Don Ruben, mira los rubios! Que grandes hombres!" ("Oh, look, Reuben, look at the fair-hairs! What grand men!)

Reuben could not help admitting that he had never seen such glorious figures physically in his life. They were all of gigantic stature, with huge muscular limbs that told of a vigorous outdoor life, seen to the better advantage that arms and legs were alike bare, save for rings of metal.

They were all white men, the whitest Reuben had ever seen, with bright golden hair and fierce blue eyes. There was not a dark face or figure among them, and not a man but had the muscles of an athlete.

The only variety was in the shade of the hair, which they wore very long and curling. In some cases it was a faint flaxen hue, nearly white, while in others it became a strong golden red. In all it was accompanied with the same marvelously fair complexion and skin, the same appearance of vigor and pride.

These men wore helmets of various shapes, of

which the favorite seemed to have two wings rising from the sides as a crest, while more than one was decorated with the skull of a polar bear as a head-piece.

Their bodies were covered with short leather tunics, ornamented with scales of yellow metal or white sea-shells sown in patterns, and they seemed to be well-armed with spears, battle-axes and a sort of long mace, carrying a spiked ball at the end of a chain.

They had stopped their confused shouts as they passed the kayacks; the warriors had laid their shields beside them in order as they rowed, and they struck up a wild chant as they bent to the oars, three or four men to each.

Thus the strange pageant passed by, and Reuben and Dolores sat gazing at each other in mute wonder till the boy ejaculated:

"Heavens, Dolores! Where have I seen them before? It seems to me as if I knew every face in that boat, especially the giant in the bow with the eagle wings in his helmet. Where have I seen them?"

"You saw them in the vision at Mother Igloolik's," was the reply. "I recognized them the moment the sail came round the point, from what you said when you were in the trance."

Reuben stared.

"What trance?"

He had forgotten all about it.

"Never mind, *muchacho*," she said, kindly. "They are gone now and we cannot help our friends by staying here. Let us go on and try to find my father and yours. They are somewhere here."

Reuben looked thoughtfully after the retreating sea-rovers and presently burst out:

"I know now, I remember all about it. I have seen them in pictures of the old Vikings. Dolores, they are the same old Norsemen that once held all Greenland. 'Twas said that the Esquimaux surprised and murdered them all in the depth of winter, but some must have got away up here and lived alone ever since. Yes, they are the same all over, our ancestors; what we should have been had we lived the same wild lives."

The boy was full of enthusiasm as he rattled on, but his companion did not seem to share it.

"I know nothing of your Norsemen," she answered; "but I know that if my father be still alive he must be among them in this land, and I care for nothing till I have found him. Will you come with me, *muchacho*, or shall I go on alone?"

"I will follow you anywhere and as long as there is breath in my body," answered Reuben, enthusiastically. "Oh, Dolores, how the world will honor us when we go back to America to tell them all about this country, where no man has ever yet been who came back to tell the tale! Who knows? We may even find the English expedition of Franklin, which went up to the North and was never heard of after."

Thus Reuben rattled on, wild with delight, as he paddled on with Dolores down the fast-widening passageway to the north.

He and she seemed to have forgotten entirely the fact that the dragonship, with a hundred wild Norse sea-robers aboard, was sweeping down the channel in all probability to attack their friends in the Sarah Jane, while their own retreat was cut off to a dead certainty.

But both had that happy faculty of youth which throws all fear of consequences to the winds, and sees everything through the rosy light of hope. Dolores was oblivious to all danger in the hope of finding the father whom she had lost for eight years; and Reuben, in his eagerness to see new worlds and new people, had forgotten all about even his own father.

In about half an hour's swift paddling they had turned the point which the Norse galley had passed with favoring wind and tide, and found themselves at the entrance of a bay that widened rapidly before them into the open sea of their hopes which spread out in a sheet of little waves, sparkling in the sun. But this alone would not have been sufficient to rivet their attention, for they had expected it.

Something more wonderful still was before them, in the fact they could see the whole surface of the sea plainly for hundreds of miles, as if the usual roundness of the earth had entirely disappeared, and further that this sea was surrounded by a circle of lofty mountainous islands, from the peaks of at least nine of which streamed columns of smoke high in the blue heavens, while their bases, as far as could be seen, were covered with luxuriant vegetation.

"Oh, Dolores," cried Reuben, the instant this sight burst on them, "it is true. We have reached the Pole at last!"

Dolores looked at him in a puzzled way as she asked:

"The Pole! What pole, *amigo*? I know nothing of Poles. I am looking for my father."

"Do you not know that the earth is what the astronomers call an oblate spheroid, flattened at the poles?" cried Reuben, testily. "Here is the proof before our eyes that it is even flatter than any one thinks. It's almost a valley that lies before us, and for six months the sun never leaves it, Dolores. What with the direct sunlight and the reflection from these mountains, the heat must sometimes approach that of the tropics. See how luxuriantly the trees grow. We must go near and find out what they are, for they must be capable of standing the long gloom and cold of the polar night of six months."

Dolores did not heed him much. She was searching the prospect for some tokens of the object of her search, and Reuben continued his raptures to a careless listener.

"See what a variety of life," he exclaimed. "Whales and seals sporting beside dolphins and porpoises, those fishes of a temperate clime; and the sea-lions basking on those rocks like they do at San Francisco. There are birds of all latitudes,

from the little auk that loves the icebergs to the swallow of our own lands, and song-birds of every variety in the woods all round us. Do they live here all the year, or are they migratory, I wonder? But where are the people?"

"Yonder," answered Dolores, in a quiet tone. "See, *muchacho*, we have found the island of your dreams at last and my father and yours are both there."

She pointed out to sea, where became visible afar off two or three islands with volcanic peaks, all smoking together, and one of them had, scattered round the foot of the mountains, a number of little white specks that resembled houses.

Reuben drew forth his glass and inspected these supposed evidences of human habitation very closely. At last he said:

"Take the glass, Dolores. Your eyes are better than mine. I can only see the specks a little plainer, like white stones."

The girl took the glass and looked long and earnestly. When she laid it down she said, frankly:

"I can see no more than you. It must be very far off."

Reuben suddenly smote his knee with an air of vexation.

"How stupid of me not to have thought of it, when the evidence is before our eyes. If we were on any other part of the earth's surface probably we could not see those islands, for our horizon would be but a matter of nine or ten miles, but here the water seems to be absolutely flat, and there is no telling whether those islands are ten, twenty, or even a hundred miles off, for we see them in a straight line."

Then he turned the glass to sweep the shores of this singular sea, which was as round, to all seeming, as an artificial pond, and pretty soon became convinced that there must be a population of some density inhabiting the vicinity. He counted twenty or thirty white sails moving about on the waters in different directions, though at such distances as utterly bewildered his eye, accustomed to see the topsails of a ship come into sight before the hull, over the curved surface of the earth.

Here there was absolutely no curve, and it even seemed to him, such was the deceptive appearance of everything, as if the middle of the sea was lower than the sides, giving it the appearance of a valley of waters, held in equilibrium by magic arts.

All this time he heard nothing of his friends in the Sarah Jane and had almost forgotten all about them, when his attention was arrested by the dull booming of a piece of ordnance, far away up the Giants' Pass, where the echoes repeated it again and again.

Both the young kayakakers started, for the stillness had been so deep before, that the report sounded doubly loud.

"They are fighting!" exclaimed Reuben, excitedly. "The Norsemen have attacked them! What will become of my poor mother? They have but one little brass signal gun, and that is worthless. They will all be killed, unless the Norsemen have changed much from what they were in old days. Oh, Dolores, let us go back and help them."

"What could we do, *muchacho*?" she asked, impatiently. "If they have fought your friends it is all over, one way or the other, by this time. Let us go on, say I."

"But my mother," cried Reuben, in a tone of intense fear. "They will kill her. I must go back."

And so saying, he turned his back resolutely on all the splendors of the scene that he had been viewing with so much delight, and began to ply his paddle-manually on his return to the Sarah Jane.

Dolores looked after him with a little sigh, and then muttered to herself:

"I cannot help it. They are nothing to me now. I have a father I love better than he can love his mother. Farewell, Don Ruben."

Then the girl turned her kayak resolutely out toward the volcanic island which Reuben had so strangely described in his dream, and paddled away over the short dancing waves that glittered so brightly in the sunshine. She was going to find her father.

Meanwhile Reuben worked with all his might to effect a swift return to his uncle's ship. Swift and light as was his kayak, it seemed to him to crawl along at a snail's pace as he swept through the dark chasm of Giants' Pass. The tide was still running out as rapidly as ever, so that his progress was really at a rate of nearly ten miles an hour, and he was through the pass and back in the bay where he had left the Sarah Jane in less than twenty minutes.

He heard at intervals the gun fired four or five times, and the sound gave him fresh courage, inasmuch as it proved to him that his friends were still fighting. But he was tormented with fear as he reflected that there were only about a dozen firearms of all kinds in the ship, and that the supply of ammunition was limited to one barrel of blasting-powder for use on ice-floes, a box of cartridges for a Remington rifle and another for the Colt's revolvers that constituted the bulk of their little armory. As he reached the bay he looked anxiously for the ship.

She was gone!

CHAPTER XXI.

THE NORSEMEN.

Yes, the Sarah Jane was gone, but for all that, she was not very far off. Reuben could see the black outline of a buoy bobbing about over the spot where she had last been anchored, showing that she had been compelled to slip her cable in a hurry, and a glance out into the bay disclosed the ship herself under a cloud of canvas, standing out to sea, followed by the Norse galley, which hung on at her quarter like a bulldog following a bull.

The breeze was light and the ship not making

much way, but the lines of her model were so much superior to those of the bluff-bowed Norse vessel, that it seemed as if the latter must be distanced in the end.

The sea-robbers had their oars out, dashing up the water in clouds of white foam, and getting out of their clumsy bark all she could bear, but they seemed to be unable to catch the Sarah Jane, which was clipper-built.

Just as the boy came in sight he saw a flash from the stern of the ship, and realized that they had got the little signal-gun on the stern rail and were firing into the enemy's ship. Whether it had any effect, he could not see, but he heard a savage roar from the rovers, and they dashed their oars more madly than ever, till it seemed that they gained on the vessel at every stroke.

There was something so pitilessly ferocious in these shouts that Reuben shuddered and turned sick at heart as he listened. He reflected on the terrible tales he had read of the old Norse warriors, when they were in that state of frenzy called "Berserker," and began to realize that these dwellers by the open Polar sea were the same old Norsemen who were once the terror of all Europe for their daring and cruelty. They were the same men, without the advantages of civilization, as their ancestors. They had simply stood still for six centuries, since the day when they had found a secure haven within the ice-girdle that hid the open Polar sea from the world at large.

Here they had staid, maintaining, perforce, an absolute purity of race, and intensifying all the fierce traits which had once made them lords of every country where the name of the Vikings was used to frighten the children to sleep.

All these thoughts swept through Reuben's mind with wonderful rapidity, as he paddled along at his utmost speed, overhauling the combatants.

The wind was so light that the Sarah Jane could not make much way, and the rovers' galley was too bluff-bowed to go fast, so that he soon found himself under the gangway of the ship, on the side opposite to that on which the rovers were pressing forward.

Then he shouted aloud for a rope, but the people on board the Sarah Jane were too eagerly engaged in watching their enemies to give heed to the tiny boat on their beam, and he reluctantly found himself obliged to give up the race and sheer off away from the ship, which was beginning to gather way as it left the lee of the land.

When he got a little further out he renewed his shouts, and presently had the satisfaction of seeing his cousin, Kate Macy, look over the quarter-rail and wildly wave her arms to him, as a signal, before she turned inboard again. Almost at the same moment, however, he heard a loud shout behind him, and looking round, saw that the Norse vessel was coming up on the same side of the ship as himself, and obliquely in pursuit of his kayak.

With a rapid dash of his paddle he whirled away, and no doubt would have made his escape without much difficulty, had he not been so near ere he began his exertions.

As it was, before he could get fairly out of range, the gigantic warrior on the bow, whom he had noticed before, suddenly poised a heavy javelin and cast it straight at the kayak, with such true aim and strength that the weapon went through the frail vessel, opening two great holes, through which the water began to pour in a moment, and Reuben found himself sinking.

What next happened he could hardly tell in the hurry and confusion. He heard a loud shriek in Kate's voice; felt himself going down; his head was already under water, when a rope came twining and flapping in his face; he clutched it wildly, and felt himself drawn up; then he had a vision of the side of the Norse galley full of fierce faces, and saw two or three men stretch out their hands to grasp him.

Instantly he retained his hold on the rope, for the weight of the kayak was dragging him down, and then he felt himself seized and jerked up on deck as if he had been but a feather's weight. Then he was plucked out of the hole of the kayak, and saw his little canoe tossed overboard before his eyes, so that inside of a minute from the time that he first heard the shout he was a prisoner in the midst of a crowd of fierce barbarians, while his friends were looking helplessly on.

But in the hurry consequent on his capture one thing had happened favorable to the safety of the Sarah Jane. The Norse galley had come round and the ship had already gained nearly a cable-length on her, while the wind was freshening every moment. It was clearly useless for the rovers to pursue any longer, and so they seemed to think, for they ceased their work from that moment and turned their attention to Reuben.

Contrary to the lad's expectation, he was handled not ungraciously by these wild men, seeming to be to them an object of some curiosity and mere amusement. He felt like a baby in the midst of a crew where every man seemed to be at least six feet high, and where there was more than one who might fairly be called a giant. However, he found himself picked up and passed along by these huge fellows, who seemed to be much amused at something, and who kept talking to each other and laughing in their deep, powerful voices.

The only word he could distinguish was one frequently repeated as the warriors commented on him. This was the word "Skrraeling." They seemed to have settled on it that he was a "Skrraeling," whatever that might be.

At last he was set down in the stern before the hollow of the curving fish-tail, in which sat an old man with very long white hair and a beard that reached his waist. This old man had evidently been a warrior in his day, for his frame was still vast and muscular, but if so, he had long abandoned the profession of arms, for he had no weapons, and

was clothed in a long robe of some woven stuff, blue in color, while a rude harp stood by his side.

Two of those rough warriors set Reuben down in front of this singular old man, and observed, with one of their loud laughs:

"Ho, Yarl Hakon, a Skraeling."

The old man bent his bushy brows on the boy and grazed on him out of as fierce a pair of blue eyes as Reuben had ever seen. Then he shook his head and said, gravely:

"Nay."

"Yo, yo," repeated one of his captors, eagerly, bursting into a flood of words that Reuben could not understand and pointing to the boy in such a way as to show that he was insisting on his view of the case.

But old Yarl Hakon, if that were his name, still replied "Nay," and Reuben had found the meaning of two Norse words, very much the same as English: "Yo" and "Nay."

The grave and authoritative manner of the old man, who appeared to be the chief in command, silenced the dispute; and Reuben perceived that it was a settled matter that he was not a "Skraeling."

The boy's memory also recorded the fact that "Skraeling" was the name which the Norse settlers of Greenland had given to the Esquimaux when they first saw them, eight hundred years before, being a term of contempt at their dwarfish stature.

He reasoned therefore that these men must have at first taken him for an Esquimaux on account of his kayak; but that the old chief, more keen-sighted, had detected in him the marks of a different race. He realized also that this was lucky for him, inasmuch as any remnants of the old Norse colonists that had escaped the treacherous massacre of the fourteenth century by these same Skraelings, must naturally retain the most vindictive feelings toward them.

Whatever the matter of the discussion between the Norsemen concerning him—and he could not understand save by watching their gestures—it resulted favorably for him to all appearance; for his captors released him and signed to him to sit down at the feet of Yarl Hakon, which he did readily, thankful to secure a whole skin for the time.

He began to feel, in spite of his perilous position, a sense of pleasure in watching these magnificent men, among whom he had been cast so strangely, and in trying to trace in their deep-toned words the likeness of the English tongue which he knew had descended therefrom.

In the meantime the Norsemen sailed out to the entrance of the bay at a distance from the Sarah Jane, which had cleared the mountains and was standing to the east along the icy outer shore of Macy Land.

They evidently realized their incapacity to overtake the ship, for after a little they turned their course back to the Giant's Pass, and stood on till the wind failed them, which it did very soon, when they took to their oars.

Reuben sat quietly at the feet of the old chief, Yarl Hakon, and watched the vessel entering once more the solemn avenue of the Giants' Pass. He noticed as they came in that the tide was turning, for the vessel did not seem to have any difficulty in making her way along, and the water at the foot of the rocks was quite smooth and still.

They passed on till the shores of the inner bay opened on their sight, when Reuben began to be sensible of a low murmur among the mountains in their rear, fast increasing to the sound of a rushing wind. What it could be he knew not, but it seemed to be well understood by the Norsemen, who began to call to each other about something in which the boy could only catch one word which he recognized.

That word was "Agur," and it explained a good deal to him. He knew that the great tide wave as it rushes up narrow passages and into small rivers is called in the eastern counties of England, where the Danes and other Norsemen settled, the "eager" or "heyger," and he thought that this might be the same word.

Pretty soon he found he was right, for looking back over the stern he saw a long curling wave come rushing along the foot of the black rocks of Giants' Pass, dashing the foam high in air and spreading wider and lower as it entered the bay.

Along with the tide the boy was sensible of a change in the wind, beginning in faint puffs from the Giants' Pass, till a regular fresh gale came from thence, ruffling the bay into waves and filling the great square sail of the galley till she drove rapidly out of the bay into the open sea.

Here he looked eagerly round for some signs of Dolores in her kayak, but the girl seemed to have disappeared like an insect in the vast expanse of sea that stretched round them, and which Reuben had now a good opportunity to inspect.

The further they advanced into this curious inland sea the more was Reuben impressed with its want of similarity to anything he had ever seen before. The absence of that curved surface, so familiar on the ocean, was of itself a puzzle for it seemed to deprive him of every standard of comparison in distance.

Things grew smaller as they receded, but there seemed to be none of that blueness which is so common a feature of all the landscapes, and which is one of the effects of the curving lines of the atmosphere.

In this Polar Valley of waters the distant mountains were nearly as plain as those close by, and he felt puzzled to form any judgment as to their real distance.

But one thing was plain enough, that the shores and islands of this sea were inhabited by a population capable of building stone houses; for as they

advanced they saw more than one mansion on the shores, and the white structures on the island grew plainer as they sailed on.

One ominous feature, however, the boy noticed as they passed out of the bay. On each side of the entrance was raised a stone castle with round towers, exactly in the style which prevailed in Europe in the twelfth century, and every building which was near enough to be distinguished revealed the same grim and warlike features.

It seemed as if these people, cut off as they were from the rest of the world by impassable barriers, and apparently secure from molestation by others, were yet engaged in warfare among themselves, and lived practically much as they had done in the middle ages, when the sword was the only arbiter of right.

But all these reflections were soon banished from his mind by the spectacle of another vessel, a little larger than their own, which came sailing and rowing toward them from one of the castles at the right of the bay.

The stranger carried a white flag with a black salter—cross placed diagonally from corner to corner—and seemed to be recognized at once as an enemy, for the Norsemen began to talk excitedly, while the old chief delivered some orders in a loud tone.

Reuben glanced up at the device on their own flag and saw that the red field contained a great black raven in full flight, and then he devoted his attention to the maneuvers of the two vessels, conscious that battle was imminent.

Old Yarl Hakon seemed to be quite cool and collected, in spite of the disparity of force between him and the stranger, and the warriors were laughing and shouting in their wild way, with flashing eyes, as if they enjoyed the prospect.

The giant whom Reuben had noticed on the prow was particularly wild in his demonstrations, and began to shout at the top of his voice, leaping up and down on his perch and shaking his long hair till it stood out like an aurole round his head.

The strange galley came sweeping on with trumpets sounding and men singing some sort of wild war-song; and lo! on the prow stood another wild Norseman, point for point like their own.

Now they were within a few hundred yards, when the champion of the red flag began to foam at the mouth, shouting louder than ever, and presently dashed his helmet into the sea, tore off his mail-coat, and stood out nearly naked on the dragon's head, his voice changing to a series of wild maniacal shrieks.

Then the Norsemen of the red flag uttered a tremendous roar of triumph, in which Reuben heard the words, "Berserker! Berserker!" repeated in thunder tones.

The stranger was now almost aboard, but at the sound of that shout his crew stopped rowing, and in another moment the red galley crashed into their bows, raked the whole bank of oars on that side and then grappled.

Impelled by an irresistible fascination, Reuben started up by Yarl Hakon and watched the sight. He saw two great grappnels, at the end of chains, cast on board the stranger, and then the giant in their own bows took a flying leap into the midst of his enemies, wielding a great ax, and began to hew down right and left, all naked as he was, regardless of spear and mace.

At the same time the Norsemen boarded with a sudden ferocity and utter recklessness that amazed Reuben, who had never seen such a thing before. Their antagonists met them with equal ardor, and for some minutes the crash of blows on mail, the savage shouts of the combatants and the dull thud that marked the thrust of the deadly lance or stabbing-sword, made a pandemonium of sound that was indescribably horrible.

But such grim slaughter could not last long. There seemed to be no sort of caution observed by either side; it was all stab, cut, kill, and no flinching.

The most remarkable figure of all was the giant Berserker, smiting right and left with his ax, while the blows came raining down on him from all quarters, and yet no drop of blood stained the whiteness of his skin. Man after man went down under that fearful ax, and still the men of the red galley pressed on, driving their foes further and further, till a loud shout of triumph burst from every throat, as the men of the white galley suddenly lost heart; and all leaped overboard, armed as they were, to sink and drown.

Then the wild Berserker uttered a tremendous yell and flung his bloody ax straight up in the air, where it mounted to an astonishing height, coming down on the deck with a force that sent the spike between the two blades several inches into the solid timbers.

"Eric Rydd! Eric Rydd!" was the shout of the Norsemen over their champion, whose hair was a bright golden red, and then down fell the great Berserker on the deck, foaming at the mouth and shaking in all over in a violent fit.

Reuben had seen the famous Berserker frenzy, and it seemed plain that Red Eric was a maniac and an epileptic.

Hardly had he made this observation when there arose a shout among the Norsemen, and a moment later a tall figure leaped through the midst of them with wonderful rapidity, bounded on board the red galley and came running to Yarl Hakon, kneeling at his feet.

In a moment more a dozen wild Norsemen were leaping after him, but ere that moment arrived Reuben uttered a glad cry of joy:

"FATHER!!!"

"REUBEN!!!"

Then father and son were locked in each other's

arms, while the Norsemen dropped their weapons with a shout of wonder and stood staring at the pair, and Yarl Hakon waved his hand forbiddingly toward them, saying, in his deep tones of dignity:

"Nay, nay."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY.

QUIETLY over the sunlit sea toward the distant islands sailed the Norse galley under a breeze blowing momentarily fainter and fainter.

The vessel that had lately borne the white flag with the black cross was slowly sailing behind them carrying its mournful load of dead bodies, for the Norsemen had lost nearly half their number.

Hardy a man of those left alive had escaped un wounded, though not one of them seemed to mind their hurts even to the extent of binding them up, but allowed the blood to dry on them, as if they had been but scratches of small importance.

Reuben Macy and his father sat at the feet of Yarl Hakon in earnest conversation, prisoners to be sure, but unguarded and talking freely. The burly Norse men seemed to regard them with a kindly sort of in difference, secure that they could not escape; and Captain Macy was telling his son all the adventures which had brought him into such a strange predicament.

"I am a slave, Reuben, my boy, as you are, and our only consolation is that we are together in our prison. I was a slave in the Golden Serpent, as they called the ship which I left; and we are both slaves now in the Black Dragon of Yarl Hakon. The only difference is that Yarl Hakon has the repute of being a kind master, while Yarl Harold was a devil of cruelty."

"But where are the rest of the crew of the Pride, and where is the ship, father?"

"The poor ship lies in three hundred fathom of water outside the entrance to the Giants' Pass, and the men—such as were not killed in the fight—are slaves to the different Yarls that divide this kingdom with their petty quarrels."

"The fight! What fight, father? I only know that you sunk the ship and took to the boats."

"Yes; the poor old *Pride* had been squeezed so badly in the ice that we couldn't keep her afloat, and she sank outside the bay after we had loaded the boats up with all the food and arms we could carry. You know the land outside the bay, has a terribly inhospitable aspect, and we felt dreary enough as we coasted along; for winter was approaching and we had but a week's provisions and no fuel. But when we reached that bay, which we named Paradise Bay on the spot, we were full of hope, for we could not help observing the increase of vegetation as we advanced to the north. We pulled along merrily through the Giants' Pass, as every one calls it, even the Norsemen; and came boldly out into the sea, coasting along the shores by Yarl Eric's castle. He is a great friend of Yarl Hakon here, and it is a wonder to me how Yarl Harold could have dared to come into these waters so near all his bitter foes. We were not molested by any of Yarl Eric's men, who were away at the time, and we passed on, wondering much at the size of the castles and the apparent absence of any fixed agricultural population, though the soil seemed so luxuriant. But ere we had gone far we saw our mistake, when two of these accursed galleys, full of men, came bearing down on us, sounding their trumpets and clashing their weapons. Of course we knew that meant fight, and as we had some twenty rifles and a lot of ammunition, we opened on them as if they had been common savages. We never made a worse mistake, as we soon found. These people have been cooped up here for six hundred years, in a lake about the size of France, with a strip of land all round it and three little islands. The land is fit to support about sixty thousand people, but these have increased to nearly three times that amount, living on fish and sea-birds, too haughty and lazy to cultivate the land, and holding the one virtue of courage above all others. They do not seem to value life a straw, and kill or enslave all the survivors after a fight."

"We fired volley after volley into them as they came on, sending our last shots into the mass at twenty paces, and the only result was to enrage the survivors to a frenzy like that Berserker's. They came leaping down into our boats with their axes, knocking our biggest men about like children, and in five minutes it was all over, and we—that is, all those left alive—threw into the holds of their galleys, tied up like chickens for market."

"Ever since that we have been slaves, used to till Snorr Erlson's lands, on the island under the Pole, till the fight began between him and Yarl Hakon."

"And who is Snorr Erlson, father?"

"He was only one of the petty Yarls a few years ago, but he has beaten one after the other of the rest, till now he is recognized as king by Yarl Harold, and about ten of the others. His only rival is Yarl Hakon, here."

"And where does Yarl Hakon live?"

"In the largest of the islands, the one we are approaching now. It is about five hours' sail from Snorr Erlson's island, which lies right under the pole star. The old Yarl was a great warrior in his day, and a scold besides. A scold is what they call a bard, who plays the harp and sings. Now, Yarl Hakon never fights nor carries weapons, but commands his Black Dragon as fearlessly as ever, with Red Eric to lead the fighters."

"This Red Eric is a madman, is he not, father?"

"I can hardly say. They tell me that this berserker frenzy was more common once in the old days of Harold Fairhair, King of Norway, the man that Snorr Erlson is anxious to imitate, but there are very few berserkers now. The strange thing about the whole business is that one of these berserkers,

when the fit is on him, seems to be quite inaccessible to wounds. I could understand their strength and courage, but I have seen them dash naked through a fire and come out unharmed, while they rarely get so much as a scratch in their fights. It's a wonderful thing, altogether."

"And what made you come on board this boat, father?"

"To save my life, Reuben. I had heard that Yarl Hakon was one of the few kind and merciful men in this terrible place. I was a slave in Yarl Harold's boat, chained to an oar, but I managed to get loose during the fight, and hid under the half-deck, in the bow. As soon as Red Eric went off in his fit, I saw that my chance was come, so I ran for it, and got through, safely. I think that my meeting with you was a lucky chance for me, for it surprised them all, and gave them time to think."

"And are these people Christians, father?"

Captain Macy smiled.

"They call themselves so, still, but I fear no one would know it, for they have relapsed into many of their old heathenish practices since they have been shut out from the world. They worship the old Norse Gods, Odin, Thor, Balder, and Friga; only they call them saints. They drink beer out of the skulls of their enemies, just as they did in the old times, and the only remnant of Christianity that I can see in them is a reverence for the cross as an emblem of something or other; they hardly know what."

"And tell me, father, how do these people live, and have you learned their language, yet?"

"Yes, I can speak their tongue now. At first I could not understand a word, but one day it struck me that what I heard was very much like English such as the country folks talk, and after that I picked it up very quickly. They live almost entirely by fishing and hunting, but they make the slaves cultivate fields of barley, and brew beer from it on which they get drunk. Then there is plenty of wild honey in the woods, and they make mead out of that. As for bread, I never saw any here. It is all meat and beer from one year to the other. They have fine times in the long summer, for when once the sun shows himself over the mountain-tops he stays there, going round and round the circle, getting higher every day, and everything grows like magic. But when he goes behind the hills in the winter, he leaves first about a month of twilight, then four months of total darkness, and then another month of twilight before he comes back. Those are the dull times, for it gets too dark to fight, and the men have to stay in their castles and pass their time as they can. That is the women's time for feasts and dances, while the men wrestle and play at fighting to amuse them."

"Is it cold, then?"

"No, and that is the strange part of it all. We never have snow, and the ground feels warm, even when the air is cold. The ice blocks up the outer bay and comes up to the entrance of Giants' Pass, but it never gets any further. It must be the influence of these volcanoes around us. Every now and then one of them ceases to smoke, and we have slight earthquakes, while the ground gets very warm, till the fire breaks out again. It is only when the island in the middle of the sea stops that we have real trouble. That happened a few weeks ago, and we had a very heavy earthquake, the ground trembling constantly till the fire broke out again."

"Yes, father, that is what enabled us to come here," and Reuben told in as few words as possible the history of their finding the bottle in the fish and of their subsequent voyage to the shores of Macy Land.

Captain Macy listened attentively till Reuben came to the finding of the flag-staff under Humboldt Glacier and the deserted hut, when he observed:

"Yes, we came the same way and found a man living there, a Spaniard called Zuniga, who came here with us. He had been wrecked on an iceberg and had drifted into the Middle Pack, which he followed till he arrived at Smith Sound, where he had been living like a hermit for a period of seven years."

"Yes, father, and we found his only daughter, living among the Hoskies at Disco, and she entered this sea with me this morning in a kayak. Poor girl, I fear these robbers must have snatched her up."

"No. A woman is in no danger here. On the contrary, the women are the rulers in all things, and the men never refuse them anything. That is their best trait. If the girl understands their language she can go anywhere and ask for anything."

"And where is her father?"

"He is high in favor with Snorr Erlison, who has made him a sort of prime minister, though he is, under their laws, still a slave. This Zuniga is a man of great size and strength, and has been trained to the use of arms. He threw their best wrestlers, one after the other, and showed them how to use their fists, so that they treated him with great respect. I think his black hair and huge black beard, so different from their light complexions, had a good deal to do with it. I am fair, and although pretty strong, no match for these giants; but this Zuniga is as big as any of them. Moreover, he seems to be a man of great intelligence and has taught them all sorts of things that I know nothing about, so he is a prince and I only a slave."

The poor man sighed as he made this remark, and Reuben echoed the sigh. They seemed to be in a helpless position.

While they sat absorbed in their gloomy reflections a shadow stole across the galley deck, and looking up, Reuben saw that they were approaching the volcanic island in the midst of the sea, the shadow being caused by the smoke crossing the sun.

A few minutes later they entered a spacious bay,

bordered with a long row of stone houses, built in the same fortress-like style that characterized all the edifices in that strange land, and Yarl Hakon signed to them to rise.

They did so, and Reuben saw that the shore was covered with girls and women in white, waving their hands in welcome.

CHAPTER XXIII. THE TURNING OF THE TIDE.

WHEN Uncle Jabez saw that the Sarah Jane was safely out in the open sea, with the advantage of the Norse rovers in point of speed, he drew a deep sigh of relief, and remarked to the honest mate:

"That was a close call, Folger."

"It were that," was the candid reply; "and if we hadn't got in, jest in time to slip the cable and go to sea, I'm doubtful if we could have fought those devils off. I never seen such men. Injuns ain't a circumstance to 'em, 'cause Injuns will run if they find themselves gittin' killed, but them fellers seemed to git the more savage the more we plugged it to 'em. I guess we must have put half a bushel of old iron into the thick of 'em, and they didn't seem to mind it no more nor so much snowballs. I wonder what kind of men they kin be, Cap? They was white enough to be Christians. Well, well, they've got poor little Rube, and I guess he's gone for good, if they don't cook him and eat him."

Uncle Jabez was about to answer when he was disturbed by a tug at his elbow and saw Kitty Macy, with a pale and tear-stained face, regarding him pitifully.

"Oh, uncle," she burst out, "are you going to let those wretches murder poor Reuben without an effort to help him? We have a ship big enough to kill them all, if we only try. Let us run in and rescue Reuben."

Uncle Jabez shook his head sorrowfully.

"Tain't no use jest now, Kitty, till the wind starts up. We wouldn't have a ghost of a chance in a light wind, for those devils would board us in no time, and then we would be gone up, indeed. Why, they kin put in ten men to our one, and we hain't got ammunition to fight 'em if we had the arms. No, no, I'm afraid we're in a bad box, my gal."

He was interrupted by the loud flapping of the sails as the wind died away, and looked anxiously astern to see if his enemies were still there. To his great gratification they were no longer in sight. They had disappeared into the recesses of the bay which the Sarah Jane had entered that day under such auspicious circumstances, and the bay itself was hidden by the white shoulder of the glaciers of Macy Land.

"Waal," observed Folger at this moment, "this looks bad, Cap, hevin' to stay out here among these cussed glaciers, all along of them white devils—for they're worse than any savages I ever seen."

The honest mate seemed to be much disgusted at the prospect before him, and his depression was reflected in the face of every one on board.

Mrs. Macy, who had held up under the excitements and strains of the last few days, was now quite broken down, and sat sobbing by Kate for the loss of Reuben.

Jonathan, who had been the busiest on board while the fighting lasted, now sat by the taffrail, brooding; for it seemed a settled thing that the crew of the Sarah Jane had given up the fight for good.

Thus they lay for some time, the sails flapping in the calm as the ship rolled uneasily in the swell, while the cold air which hung round the base of Macy Land began to deposit icicles on the rigging, showing that the temperature was rapidly falling.

While thus they lay there, it seemed to every one as if they were shut out from paradise, as they remembered the lovely scenes which they had lately witnessed, all the more striking from their contrast to the snow and ice round them.

At last came a sudden lurch of the vessel, the flapping of the sails ceased, and Uncle Jabez started up with the instinct of a sailor.

"Hard down with the helm!" he cried. "Hands by the braces! Here comes the wind!"

Sure enough it came sighing and groaning through the rigging, increasing every moment, while the Sarah Jane, taken flat-aback, was moving rapidly astern.

But Uncle Jabez was not one to be caught napping, and he trimmed his yards to meet the sudden shift, till the vessel spun round on her heel and went bowing out to the mouth of the bay, in advance of the great tide swell that they could see sweeping along the shores of Macy Land, under a stiff breeze that made the masts groan.

In less than ten minutes from the time that they were mourning over the calm they were going at ten knots an hour, and their spirits rose at once with the rapid motion.

But when it came to entering the bay, Uncle Jabez, cautious on account of his old age, hesitated, and it was not till a deputation of sailors came aft to volunteer to go through any dangers, that he consented.

"For ye see, boys," said the old man, "this here is my s'arch arter my family; and I ain't no busness to risk any other folks' lives for that; but if so be you're all willin' to go in and take the chances of fightin' these white devils, up with the helm and let her walk."

The response was three hearty cheers, and then the men dispersed to their posts, while Jonathan started up, a new man, and even Mrs. Macy and Kate looked more cheerful.

There was something so different in the aspect of things now, as they dashed into the bay. The winds of this peculiar country seemed to resemble those of the tropics, in changing periodically from land to sea breeze with the tides or changing light.

The tide-wave which they had observed at first in their rear had by this time swept far ahead up the bay, the clouds were coming up from the south in heavy masses, indicating a colder wind, and the breeze was fast freshening into a gale as they ran up the bay and in between the black walls of the Giants' Pass.

Once there the curves and shelter of the basaltic walls diminished the force of the following wind to a gentler pitch; but, thanks to its steady continuance, they swept along in safety, though in sight proximity to the rocks, till they emerged in the inner bay, safe and sound, to revel in the view of the mysterious Polar Land just thrown open to them.

They could detect the white houses, the volcanoes and the sails, just as Jonathan had, but they no longer felt the alarm that had seized them when they first saw the Norsemen. They felt that as long as the wind lasted and they could hold the open sea they were more than a match for any of the roving craft, the owners of which seemed to be ignorant of the use of gunpowder.

As they passed out of the bay, close under the walls of one of the low castles, they could see a great crowd of men thereon, evidently much excited at their coming, but the nearest vessels were at least twenty miles off, and the Sarah Jane swept on unmolested.

The wind held on for a while and then began to die away, as they advanced toward the islands in the midst of the sea. They had already noticed the strange flatness of the water that had so forcibly impressed Reuben, and found that they could see just as far from the deck as from the cross-trees. They came in full view, also, of their late enemy, as Yarl Hakon's galley swept on, followed by the captured Golden Serpent; but of all that had transpired, they were, of course, ignorant.

Fearing that they might again be overtaken by a calm, Uncle Jabez put his helm down and stood off again toward the fringing shore of this inland sea.

Ahead of them, toward the islands, seemed to be a dead calm, while the water was ruffled all round the lake and the winds seemed to be blowing toward a common center, the tall volcanic peak in the midst of the sea.

The Sarah Jane had started on her voyage round the Pole.

CHAPTER XXIV. THE WHITE DEVILS.

A BRILLIANT, but singular scene was transpiring at the island which owned the sway of Yarl Hakon, while the Sarah Jane swept on her way rejoicing.

A great throne, closed in by an arbor of flowers, was erected in the midst of a smooth, green lawn, and around this throne were gathered several hundred women of the most brilliant blonde beauty, who seemed fit mates for the grand Norse warriors that mingled freely with them.

On the throne sat Yarl Hakon himself, tall and venerable, and at his right hand, a little before, stood Captain Macy and Reuben, stripped naked, save for a waist-cloth, their arms pinioned behind them and their heads bare, while Red Eric, bearing his enormous ax, stood beside them.

In spite of the peril in which he stood—for it seemed that the debate was on the question of his and his father's immediate execution—Reuben could not help a feeling of delighted admiration as he looked round him.

Such women and girls he had never seen in his life, and the purity of their race seemed to have prevented the survival of even one plain one. As far as he could see, all were beautiful. The majority were tall and finely molded, far above the average stature of American women, and overtopping the boy himself by an inch or two. All had the same proud, regular features, high foreheads, straight noses, faces rather round than oval, with firm, resolute chins and short upper lips. There was an air of haughty, high-bred serenity about them that told of their warrior-race and privileged sex; their blue eyes were frank and fearless in expression, and they curved their white necks as if they were used to looking down at others.

All wore their bright yellow hair freely hanging down, and most had it in curls; while the younger ones wore on the forehead a plain gold band and the matrons replaced this by a species of coronet with a white plume therein. The dress seemed to be uniform among matrons and virgins, the girls being distinguished by bare arms and necks, while the matrons had theirs covered. Otherwise the dress was a simple robe of white, fastened at the shoulders with gold buckles and sweeping to the ground, while confined at the waist with a girdle of gold chain-work.

Nothing surprised Reuben more than the profusion of gold ornaments among these people, though the workmanship was rude, but the beauty of the wearers fairly amazed him. If he had ever been inclined to fall in love with Dolores, that feeling vanished entirely now, and he felt as if he could cheerfully live and die in the midst of these angelic beings.

But Yarl Hakon now began to speak, and as his people understood him it is time we did.

"My children," said the old chief, "the holy Odin has been good to us to-day. We have slain Yarl Harold and have driven away a ship full of the cowards of the Southland who profaned our domain. We have taken one of Harold's slaves alive, one of those same cowards, and here he is with his son. Do you want them killed or shall we put them to work in the mines?"

Red Eric poised his ax in both hands like a baseballist with his club, and looked round him with a laugh, asking:

"Who says kill? Is it Githa or Brunhilda? I will wager my ax against a lock of Githa's hair I can take both heads off at one blow. Shall I try?"

This ferocious sally was greeted by a silvery laugh from the beautiful creatures round, who seemed totally indifferent to scenes of blood, and Captain Macy shuddered as he looked at his son beside him.

Reuben, who understood nothing, heard the laugh and smiled brightly at a group of girls who were staring at him as they might at some curious animal.

Strange as it might appear, that smile settled his fate favorably. Reuben was a handsome, delicate boy, with a dark Italian-looking face, which he took from his mother; and when he smiled he looked particularly handsome. Moreover, his slender frame was a contrast to the brawny giants round him, and the contrast pleased the caprice of the girls.

Instantly the group at which he was looking broke up, and three of these grand blondes came running toward him, crying:

"Nay, nay, give him to us. He is pretty. He shall wait on us."

Yarl Hakon smiled. These three were sisters, daughters of his only son who had been killed in battle, and they were the spoiled favorites of the old man.

"You hear, men," he said. "Githa and Bertha and Brunhilda want the little one for a slave to play with. Shall they have him?"

"Yo, yo, Yarl, I don't want them. Let the girls have him. I shall kill the other, girls? It's the father of the little one. We found him hiding in Yarl Harol's boat, and he begged his life. Is he worth saving?"

Thus spoke Red Eric, with the same good-natured laugh as before, as devoid of compunction as if he had been killing a sheep.

The girls only laughed, and Captain Macy saw that his time was come as Githa pulled Reuben away from him, while Bertha began to twist her hand in the dark curls of the boy's hair, and Brunhilda untied his bonds.

The sailor was not without some shame at the comments he heard on his saving his own life in place of committing suicide with his savage companions. He saw that something desperate was necessary, if he wished any chance; so he suddenly started out in front of the old Yarl and cried out:

"The man that calls me a coward lies, and I can prove it on his body."

For a moment there was a dead silence, and then out burst a loud roar of laughter from the men, echoed by the girls with equal heartlessness.

"Shu u, poik, slav un," cried one of the girls, gayly, and Reuben started; it sounded so much like the Lancashire miners' "Su u, boys, slug un," equivalent to "Hit him, boys."

In fact that was just what this haughty Norse girl said, and Red Eric was about to obey the injunction, when Yarl Hakon cried:

"Nay, nay. Turn him loose," said the old Yarl, gravely. "Give him an ax and let Red Eric finish him, fighting."

"Yo, yo!" cried the girls, clapping their hands as if wonderfully enjoying the whole thing, and then they formed a great ring, while Reuben's fair captors dragged him away with them to the edge of the circle, to witness the spectacle of his own father defending his life against the giant.

Captain Macy was a brave man, but he felt his heart sink as he surveyed his huge antagonist, and reflected on what he had known him to do when in the Berserker condition. But he remembered that his only chance of ever seeing his wife and children again lay in the coming fight, and he hardened his heart to struggle through.

He had been a good deal in South American ports and had seen much of the dexterity of Spaniards in the use of the knife, besides which he had taken a few lessons himself in its employment as a weapon.

When his bonds were cut, therefore, he asked for a knife only, refusing the huge ax, which he knew he was unable to handle; and, thus armed, he instantly started toward Red Eric on a run.

The burly Norseman laughed aloud as he lifted his ax and aimed at the sailor one of those down-right blows that would have annihilated him had he been there to receive it.

But the Yankee was not there. Knowing that his life depended on his quickness, he dodged the blow, rushed in ere the other could renew it, and there he was, hanging at Red Eric's throat, his left hand buried in the giant's huge beard, while his right was stabbing away at the other's breast.

Red Eric uttered a roar of rage, dropped his ax and tried to grapple his opponent, when the active sailor suddenly sprung away, eluding his enemy's grasp.

The Norseman made a few staggering steps forward and fell prone, with the blood pouring from his wounds, while the girls began to clap their hands and shout for the victor as blithely as if he had been one of their own kind. The pure delight of seeing a battle seemed to be the ruling passion of this singular people, for they crowded round Captain Macy with cries of admiration, the men clapping him on the shoulder, while the girls favored him with their brightest smiles.

As for Red Eric, he lay on the ground perfectly unheeded, and might very likely have died there, had not his conqueror appealed to the crowd to take him up and attend to his hurts, which they did at once in dexterous fashion, carrying him off to his house.

"Will he die, father?" asked Reuben, wistfully, as the giant was borne off.

"I think not," was the answer. "These men are as healthy as wild animals, and nothing seems to kill them save a wound in the brain or heart. That

man will be out and about his business before the winter sets in, or I mistake very greatly."

While he was still speaking came a murmuring buzz from the edge of the crowd, running to the center, and a man was seen making his way to Yarl Hakon's throne, where he announced with a loud voice:

"Snorr Erlson's men are coming to fight, and the Southland ship has entered the sea. Rouse up, Yarl Hakon, for we have got to fight."

Instantly arose a great commotion. The women started a wild wailing song that seemed to excite the men to a perfect frenzy, while Yarl Hakon abruptly left his throne and stalked down to the harbor, followed by the crowd, to the row of galleys which lay moored by the bank.

Reuben and his father followed, almost unnoticed in the crowd, and looked over the level expanse of water with the rest.

There was the Sarah Jane in plain sight from truck to water-line, though at least twenty miles off, standing across the sea under a cloud of sail toward a fleet of seven galleys that were coming out from the island of Snorr Erlson to meet her as they at first thought.

A second glance revealed the fact that the galleys were coming to Yarl Hakon's island, while the ship was long distance outside them, and then the men of the island began to crowd into their own galleys to put off, leaving Captain Macy and Reuben quite unnoticed among the girls.

The captain saw this, and being a man used to emergencies, at once conceived the idea that he might escape. The three princesses who had been so quick to rescue Reuben as a pet and plaything seemed to have forgotten him now in the excitement of watching the new contest that impended, and the captain was able to draw the boy away from the rest to a little distance, when he said:

"Rube, my boy, are you ready to try for freedom at the risk of instant death if we are caught?"

The boy paled a little, but answered, resolutely:

"Yes, father, I think I am—with you to lead me."

"Then listen. All the men in this island will soon be gone out after Snorr Erlson, and there will be none left but the girls and children. They generally have some small fishing-boats that they call 'yugls,' round these ports, and these little things are sharp-built and sail fast. I propose that we take one of these when the tide turns and try to reach the Sarah Jane. You may have noticed that it is very nearly calm round these islands, except when the tide turns. Then the wind changes and there is always plenty of it about half-way to the outer shore, in that belt where Jabez seems to be holding his ship."

"Very well, father. I'm ready whenever you say the word."

"But remember this: if the women catch us at it they will tear us to pieces; for they are worse than the men when they get their blood up, beautiful as they are. I have seen them do such things as would turn your blood to ice, when they work themselves up to a frenzy and tear their hair to the music of the war-song."

"Never mind, father. I'm ready if there's any chance."

"There will be, in about five hours, when the tide turns again."

This said, the captain turned away with his son to mingle with the crowd that was now watching the exit of the galleys from the port.

Snorr Erlson's fleet was still a long way off, for the figures of his rowers were not to be distinguished, and the devices on his flags were lost in blotches of color.

He had however seven galleys, and they could see three distinct squadrons, numbering fifteen sail in all, putting out to join him from the encircling shores of the Polar Sea.

Yarl Hakon's fleet on the other hand counted eleven sail from the island alone, though there were no symptoms of any assistance coming to them from the shore.

"Yarl Eric's galley was sunk a few weeks ago," observed Captain Macy, thoughtfully, "so that accounts for his staying in his castle, but where are the others? They must be asleep or drunk. Yarl Hakon will be beaten if he cannot cut them up, one at a time."

Indeed the latter seemed to be the plan adopted by the veteran Norse leader, for his fleet held well together and rowed rapidly out, without hoisting a sail, to meet Snorr Erlson's men before they could be joined by their allies.

The view was perfectly clear and unobstructed, and the gazers from the shore could see the two fleets approaching each other, apparently crawling over the surface of the water for several hours. The women remained at their posts watching and singing their wild songs, as if they fancied the warriors could hear them; and the two slaves—for such were the captain and Reuben—kept at the edge of the crowd and waited patiently for their opportunity.

They saw the Sarah Jane, after making a long stretch to the left, turn round and come back, apparently afraid of the advancing galleys, till she was opposite Yarl Hakon's island once more, and apparently not more than a mile off, so deceptive was the distance.

Then, of a sudden, Reuben felt his father touch him, and he followed without a word down to the port, just as a faint breath of air, hot, like that from a furnace, fanned his cheek.

"The tide is turning," said the captain, as they drew out of earshot. "We shall have the first wind and come out to them when they are in a calm."

They sauntered, with an air of affected unconcern, down to the port, where lay a fleet of small, narrow boats, very different from the bluff galleys.Quickly and dexterously, while the women were watch-

ing the impending battle, the captain cast off the ropes that confined the whole fleet, and sent them afloat, tied in a string. Then, stepping into the leading boat, he hoisted the square sail just as a heavy gust came down from the mouth of the volcano, and swept boldly out of the harbor, towing his string of boats.

Reuben took the oar, which served for a helm, while his father picked up an ax and stalked aft. Arrived at the last boat he dealt it a vigorous blow in the bottom, starting a plank and letting the water in with a rush.

The sound of that blow first attracted the attention of the throng of women who stood gazing out to sea, and a wild scream of anger succeeded the measure of the war-song they had been singing. Reuben turned his head at the sound of that scream and saw the whole of the white-robed throng come flying down to the port like a flock of sea birds, their arms waving like wings, their hair streaming wildly in the wind. He looked back at the tail of boats behind him, and noticed that the last of them was not fifty feet from the shore, and that their rate of progress was very slow.

Then he heard the crash of the ax as Captain Macy drove a second boat into a wreck, and the women began to shriek out threats and imprecations as they came.

Again and again the captain sprang from boat to boat, wrecking each as he left it, and then into the water dashed the women, and came swimming after them.

Reuben saw that if something were not done they would be caught, for these Norse heroines swam with wonderful rapidity, and were fast overhauling them, owing to their long tow.

But Captain Macy persisted in his undertaking till the foremost woman had actually seized the last boat, when he cut loose all the scuttled boats, and the remainder swept out to sea with enough rapidity to baffle pursuit.

Once clear of the port, the rest of the boats were destroyed in short order, the wind increasing every moment, till Reuben and his father found themselves scudding over the wide expanse at the rate of nine knots an hour, the island getting further and further astern as they headed for the Sarah Jane.

That they were seen from the ship soon became evident, for she altered her course toward them just before the calm that preceded the change of wind struck her; but near as she seemed, it cost them three long hours' sailing ere they at last hauled up at the gangway, while Captain Macy shouted:

"Sarah Jane ahoy! throw us a rope."

Then a line of eager faces looked over the ship's side, and such a cheering and shouting as arose had never been heard before on the Sarah Jane, as the two escaped prisoners, all weary and worn, climbed the sides to be received on deck.

Mrs. Macy, contrary to expectations, did not faint; but wild Kitty, the hoyden of Nantucket, equally contrary to all expectations, did; attracting universal attention.

She was a long time recovering, and ere that, Reuben and his father had been taken down-stairs to the cabin and hastily clothed.

When Kitty opened her eyes she started up and stared round, crying:

"Reuben, Reuben, where is he?"

Then, as he came toward her with a smile, she sprang into his arms, bursting into a storm of sobs and straining him tightly as she murmured:

"Oh, Reuben, my darling, I thought you were dead."

Poor Kitty! Her secret was out, forced from her by the shock. She was but a young thing and every one had thought Jonathan her hero, but the loss of Reuben revealed the truth.

Then every thought of love or lovemaking vanished from the company on board the Sarah Jane as they looked round them and realized that the battle had begun between the two factions of the Norsemen.

"Jabez," said Captain Coffin, "I want to tell you one thing. Either we've got to take sides in this fight and gain the gratitude of one faction of these white devils, or we shall never leave this place alive."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BATTLE.

WHEN Captain Macy had delivered his opinion it was followed by a blank silence, till Uncle Jabez said:

"Why so, Jon'than? We've got a good wind to go out with. Why not pull foot at once while the tide is running, and git to sea? We've got you back, and that's all we want."

"I'll tell you why," was the answer. "The incoming wind, with the flood tide, comes quite strong; while the outgoing wind is generally weak, while the ebb tide runs like a mill-race. To get the ship through, we should have to wait till the last of the ebb, and then we should be liable to be overtaken by these galleys with their oars. You know best if you could fight them off, after they had once grappled us fairly. How many rifles have you aboard? Three. I thought as much. Jabez, it can't be done unless they choose to let us out."

"And how kin we get 'em to let us out?" asked Captain Coffin, ruefully.

"By whipping them into it," was the resolute reply. "Remember that so long as we keep where we are, about mid-way from shore to the nearest island, we shall have plenty of wind and have the heels of everything that sails this sea. Another thing, we can run down any of their galleys if we strike it fairly, if our bows don't get stove in."

"No fear of that, father," observed young Jonathan. "She's a solid mass of timber there, and she's stood plenty of nipping already by the ice."

"So much the better, boys. We can smash their whole fleet all to pieces, and I propose to do that same thing to the strongest party here—that is Snorr Erlson's crowd—and so gain the gratitude of Yarl Hakon. You see these people have been shut up here for six hundred years or so, and when they first came they remembered that their friends had been murdered in their sleep by the Skraelings, so that they believed their only safety lay in killing every Skraeling they caught intruding here. Now that their numbers have increased they still keep the old traditions, and kill or enslave all strangers, under the idea that they are foes. They are safe enough, but they don't believe it. We must show them we are their friends and allies, and that can only be done by fighting for them."

"That's sound sense, Cap," said Folger, soberly. "Ef Cap Coffin will give the word, I guess the boys will handle the ship to suit him."

The old man shook his head sadly. "No, no, boys, my head ain't what it used to be, and I wouldn't dare to sail this ship into a fight when there's better man aboard. Jon'than Macy, Senior, you're my sister Sally's husband, and you're as good a sailor as ever I were in my best days. You take the ship, and I'll be a cabin passenger hereafter. God bless ye, boy, and do your dooty."

He handed the speaking trumpet to Captain Macy as he closed, and then turned to his crew.

"Boys," cried the old sailor, "this is your new captain. I'm gettin' old and lazy. Arter me, he owns this ship."

The men, sailor-like, gave three cheers, for Captain Macy was well known to all of them as an intrepid sailor, and they had begun to catch the spirit of adventure which their surroundings were so well calculated to inspire.

Captain Macy assumed his new station at once with the confidence of an old sea captain, and ordered the ship's head laid straight for the nearest squadron of galleys, three in number, which were rowing along to enter the conflict in which Yarl Hakon's fleet was engaged. The odds so far had been in favor of the old Yarl, whose squadron outnumbered that of Snorr Erlson by four vessels, but it was obvious that if the latter could hold on long enough, Hakon would in turn be overmatched, for there were fifteen galleys putting out to help Snorr Erlson's seven, while Yarl Hakon had but eleven sail, all told.

The great Norse chief who aspired to be king was now fighting warily in retreat, unlike the usual reckless tactics of his race, and he was gaining time for his allies by so doing.

Under these circumstances it was that the Sarah Jane hauled her tacks and stood off to intercept the coming squadron, which only lacked about a mile of joining Snorr Erlson's fleet.

The sailors had noticed before this that the Norsemen seemed to be unable to beat up against any sort of wind, on account of their clumsy bagging sails, devoid of braces, and owing to the bluff round model of the vessels. Their usual course was dead before the wind, and if they took it on either quarter they could rarely hold a course steadily when it got nearly abeam. Now that the wind had shifted and blew outward from the polar islands like the spokes of a wheel, it became contrary to the course of the galleys, which at once hauled down their sails and took to their oars.

Their progress then became very slow, and the handi-ship came bowing down toward them under a stiff breeze, going about two feet to their one.

In half an hour's such sailing they were close aboard, and Captain Macy recognized the squadron as belonging to Yarl Sweyn, surnamed Airnskeag, *anglice* "Ironshag," on account of his very stiff wiry hair and beard.

Old Ironshag stood on the tall prow of his ship, the Red Wolf, and brandished a bunch of javelins in either hand. He had been a red blonde and now was turning gray, and he had the reputation, like Olaf the Great, of being able to cast a spear equally well with either hand.

Ironshag was evidently a wary old warrior as well as a bold one; for he kept his three vessels well apart from each other, and ranging on either side of the Sarah Jane, bows on, so as to present the least surface against ramming. At the same time he was willing to pass by without a fight if he could, for he shouted out in Norse:

"Go they way and let us alone. We're meat for thy betters."

Captain Macy stood up on the heel of the bowsprit, fanning his ship as the old pirate roared out his warning, and his only reply was to wave his hand shouting:

"Port a little! Steady! So!"

The ship yawed suddenly from her course and met the Red Wolf nearly bow to bow, raking her forward oars and finally staving in the sides of the vessel just forward of the mast.

All of the crew of the Sarah Jane but the helmsman were gathered on the rail of the ship, with axes, handspikes, iron crowbars and any heavy weapon they could improvise for the fray.

Down went the Red Wolf, her side crashing as the waves poured in; and then with a wild shout of fury the Norsemen began to climb up on board.

But the assault was too sudden and the ship too high out of the water for the boarders to succeed. Those of them that managed to seize hold of the stays under the bowsprit swung themselves up with amazing strength, but the greater proportion fell into the sea, and, once there, had no chance to swim, owing to the weight of their armor.

Of those that climbed up the bowsprit only Ironshag himself reached the heel, and there he was knocked overboard by the sweeping blow of a handspike in the hands of Ezekiel Folger.

In less than two minutes the Red Wolf had gone to

the bottom with every man of her heavily-armed crew, while the other two galleys turned and came driving after the Sarah Jane.

The sight of the disaster to Yarl Sweyn, instead of dismayng his followers, seemed to spur them on to vengeance; for the shouts of the crews became peculiarly wild and savage.

Old Ironshag had planned his attack well with regard to the distance of his friends and the relative rate of speed, for before the Sarah Jane could clear the vicinity, both galleys came bumping against her counter, and a pair of grapnels flew over the rail on the port-quarter, with chains attached.

"Back, boys, and beat them off," cried Captain Macy; and away went a *posse* of men at full speed to the quarter-rail just as half a dozen heads came over the top.

Then for a few moments there was a terrible struggle, as the sailors battered away at the heads of the Norsemen, and drove them back till the Sarah Jane had run about a mile under the fresh breeze.

The galley on the other quarter had missed her grapnel, for she fell astern; but the grappled galley held on like grim death, while the vengeful berserkers came tearing up the sides like wild tigers, reckles of wounds and not to be deterred by blows.

Three men crossed the rail, only to be shot dead as they leaped down, for Captain Macy had given out the pistols to a small squad of the best shots, with orders not to waste a bullet till the enemy reached the deck.

How the fight might have ended it is difficult to say, for the sailors were getting tired, the Norsemen more savage than ever; when Reuben noticed that one of the grapnels was loose, while the ship was held by the other. Calling some men to help him, he succeeded in heaving this hook overboard, and became aware from the crash that it had fallen on the galley's bottom and stove her planks out.

A moment later there came a snap and twang as the other grapnel-chain parted, and they saw the Norse galley drop astern, sinking before their eyes, her warriors dancing madly about, flinging defiance at their foes, and showing no symptom of fear, even while they were sinking. Not a man tried to save his life by throwing off his armor and swimming. They knew that among their own people one who accepted life from a foe was disgraced forever, and if he were spared the pains of slavery and permitted to return home would meet nothing but the sneers of the women for cowardice, so they preferred to die like men.

But the people of the Sarah Jane had no time nor inclination to waste pity on these wild men, even while they could not help a reluctant admiration for their courage. They had seen too much of the pitiless ferocity of the Norsemen, not to feel sure that their very existence hung on beating down every vestige of an armed foe, if they could.

Therefore Captain Macy hauled his wind as soon as the second galley sunk, and went bowing back on the trail of the third galley, which was now making its way, as hard as the men could row it, toward Snorr Erlson's fleet, now hotly engaged with the ships of Yarl Hakon.

The ship, under a cloud of sail, rapidly overhauled the galley, which pressed on till it became evident that it could not join its allies in time. Then, with the same desperate daring which had marked the action of the other two crews, the Norsemen turned round and rowed straight to close with the ship.

But Captain Macy had no fancy to try another conflict where it was possible for his enemies to board him, and just as the galley attempted to close he yawed widely, ran off before the wind to a safe distance, eluding the shock, and then steered straight for the mass of ships that lay on the water, locked together in mortal conflict.

Here he had every advantage, for the warriors were so closely engaged in fighting that they did not heed his approach till they were close aboard, when it was too late.

In less than five minutes the sharp bows of the Sarah Jane had crashed through the sides of Snorr Erlson's own ship, the White Bear, the largest galley on those waters, and was bearing down on a second when Reuben, who stood on the heel of the bowsprit, suddenly shouted:

"It is Señor Zuniga and Dolores, father. Throw them a rope."

Then the sailors saw, high on the stern of the galley they were running down, the tall figure of a man with huge black beard and flowing raven locks standing with his arm round a slender girl in the white robes of a Norse maiden, whose dark hair showed that she was of a different race.

The man seemed to have abandoned all thoughts of resistance, though he was armed like a Norse chief, for he stood passively eying the ship, as if expecting his fate, while his men were brandishing their weapons and shouting to each other in confused cries.

Crash, went the Sarah Jane into the beam of the galley, bearing her over into the deep, and just as she sunk, a rope fell from the ship's side to the man and the girl.

The ship passed over the wreck almost without sensible resistance, and the Norsemen seemed too much surprised and dismayed to attempt to board, but the Spaniard and his daughter were pulled in as the rest went down to a watery grave, and Reuben rushed up to Zuniga and Dolores, while the sailors gave a hearty cheer of joy.

The Norse-Spaniard, Zuniga, seemed to understand all about the vessel, for he greeted Reuben as if he had been an old friend, and then turned to Captain Macy, saying;

"Señor capitán, you have saved all our lives for the present, and if you will be guided by me, we shall be safe out of this sea in twelve hours, with every captive held by these pirates returned to you."

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONCLUSION.

CAPTAIN MACY hesitated a moment.

"What would you have me do?"

"Steer out of this fight into open water," replied the Spaniard. "You were wrong to help Yarl Hakon; for Snorr Erlson is the man who can alone restore order among these barbarians."

"But Snorr Erlson is drowned," said the captain.

"I ran his ship down, a moment since."

"He was not on board. He is in the Black Eagle, yonder. He is in bad straits now, and will treat for his own safety. Trust me, capitán. Remember, I have ruled these men while you were a slave, and I know them well. Let them fight alone awhile."

All the time they were talking, the Sarah Jane had been running along with the wind abeam, and was already clear of the battle, which progressed as savagely as if nothing had happened to disturb the equilibrium, though Snorr Erlson's fleet was now reduced to five, fighting Yarl Hakon two to one.

Zuniga pointed to a fresh fleet of eight sail, hitherto almost unnoticed, now close to the battle, and evidently come to help the weaker party.

"You see," he observed, "that if we went in there, we should stand a good chance of being boarded. Let them fight it out and we will have our talk to the victors."

There was so much sense in this advice that Captain Macy held on his course a little while, and then ran off past the combatants into the open water, where he hove-to and remained a quiet spectator of the sanguinary struggle.

For three long hours did the battle rage, increased after the second hour by the arrival of Snorr Erlson's last reinforcement of four ships; and at the end of that time two galleys rowed slowly out of the press, leaving behind them a confused mass of wrecks piled with dead men. It was such a grim, relentless battle as their ancestors had been wont to fight in the days of Olaf the Great, and the slaughter had been continued by the victors till the last man of their foes had been disposed of; for the Norse motto was ever the same, "No Quarter" asked or given.

But who were the victors?

That was a question which was a matter of small concern to the people of the Sarah Jane, for they realized that they had the advantage of the two crippled galleys that were left, no matter to which party they belonged.

Therefore, when Captain Macy squared his main-topsail and stood off after the galleys, it was agreed that they were in a good position to treat with the enemy; and that Zuniga, as having held some influence among them, was the proper person to arrange the business.

The ship ran rapidly down past the disabled fleet, which lay idly drifting on the waters, presenting a ghastly sight with its piles of corpses, and very soon overhauled the two galleys, which were rowing away.

"As I said, Snorr Erlson has won," remarked the Spaniard, pointing to a brilliant figure on the lofty stern of one of the galleys. "There stands the grandest man in Norseland, and worth ten of old Yarl Hakon, for he has brains as well as courage, and knows when to run and when to fight."

As they came near they could see the figure of a warrior of striking beauty, clothed in armor that seemed to flash with gold all over it. He was a young man, whose heavy clustering curls of bright golden hue flowed down over his shoulders, matched by a long blonde mustache that touched his breast on each side of a round, resolute chin. He was not tall, but his breadth of shoulder was unusual, while his great white arms, all bulging with muscles, were so long that he could touch his knee without stooping as he stood.

His blue eyes were frank and cheerful, devoid of the fierce stare that characterized most of the Norsemen, and he looked a right royal personage as he stood there, steering his galley, which was but feebly manned as compared with its usual complement.

He turned his head as the ship came on and gave some orders, when his galleys changed their course to meet her, and he waved his hand in token of peace.

"All hail, king of the Northland," cried Zuniga, as the ship passed him. "I am safe, and these are on friends from the great world outside of the ice. Will the king give us our friends and let us go in peace, or must we fight?"

Snorr Erlson smiled with an air of some vexation as he answered:

"Thou knowest I can fight no more now, and there are the men of Eric's Hold and Yarl Olaf of the Giants' Pass still to beat, though they have no ships. What wouldst thou with me, now thou hast left him who fed thee for so long?"

"You cannot blame me for going back to my own," was the reply. "Your men took us for slaves when we had never harmed you, and now we car kill you if we wish."

The Norse chief looked up with a careless laugh.

"Not so, or you would have done it before. What would ye?"

"We want all our friends who are your slaves and those of Yarl Hakon, so that we may take them away. We are all good Christians, not heathens like the Skraelings. Why should we fight, king of Northland?"

Snorr Erlson crossed himself devoutly and answered:

"We are all Christians. Be it so. I will give back your men and you shall go to your people of whom you have told me, if you will. But if you will stay with us, I swear by all the holy saints that I will

make your daughter my queen, and your race shall rule the Northland; for you are *a man* and can make fire-weapons. Will you stay?"

"If I promise, will you let these people go in peace?" asked the Spaniard gravely, while Captain Macy stared in surprise at the offer.

"I will. I care nothing for them, since I know what the rest of the world is doing, as you have told me. I am willing to take them for friends and invite them to trade. My people have been shut up in a hole long enough. If you will help me, I will try to lead them out into the light."

"But if I stay I cannot answer for my daughter," said the Spaniard, still more gravely. "She must consult her own heart, for we force not our maids to marry against their will."

"Nor we ours," was the proud retort. "Our maids are queens, and our matrons rule over princes. Let the maiden say for herself if she will be the bride of Olaf the Strong, King of the Norsemen, once named Snorr Erlson."

While this conference was going on, understood only by Zuniga, Captain Macy and Dolores, the face of the girl remained singularly devoid of confusion. The Norse tongue so closely resembled the Danish, which she had learned at Disco Bay, that she comprehended the offer entirely.

Her father turned to her now, and asked her: "How is it, Dolores: are you ready to wed King Olaf?"

Raising her head with a proud look, she spoke her answer boldly:

"Yo, for he is a man among men. He found me alone and he bowed before me as if I were a queen. I will stay here forever, if he will."

King Olaf—as we must now call him—smiled proudly back in answer to the girl as he said:

"Thou didst not know, friend, that I was out alone in my yagt when I met this fair maid, dressed like a Skraeling woman. It is true, and I was nearly killing her for a man, when she threw out her long black hair and showed who she was. She told me that she was searching for her father, and I found it was my right hand man, my Blackbeard. She made me promise to leave her when I told her where you were, and I obeyed; for a Norse warrior worships woman. Thou knowest how she found thee, and how our maidens made her welcome."

"Ay, king, I know it," answered the Spaniard; "and right glad am I she has made a worthy choice. But I have friends here, whom I am bound to protect. If I stay, will you keep faith with them?"

"I have sworn by the saints and I go not back from my word," was the proud reply. "I will come on board your ship alone, and you shall see if Olaf Snorr Erlson is a liar."

"Be it so," said the Spaniard, and Captain Macy bowed in assent.

The stalwart young king, triumphant over all his foes, soon after ascended the side of the ship, and the Americans saw themselves at last in alliance with the fierce rovers who had so hardly treated them of late.

Within a few hours after, the whole details of the alliance, offensive and defensive, were arranged, and the Sarah Jane, much to the amazement of the sailors, received on board a crew of two hundred Norse giants, led by the young king in person.

Olaf the Strong was quick to recognize the advantage given him by the swiftness of his new ally, and occupied himself in sailing round the sea, subduing the last of his foes just as Harold Fair Hair had done in Norway, a thousand years before. The Norsemen, in their secluded home, had retained all the old Icelandic legends preserved in the Sagas, and had cherished the memory of Harold Fair Hair, Olaf the Great, Hakon the Good, and the other Norse worthies who illustrate those ancient annals. It was reserved for Olaf Snorr Erlson to renew, in the nineteenth century, the deeds which had made his first ancestor illustrious in the ninth, and he was quick to see the advantages of civilization to aid him in his task.

There is but little more to tell ere this history closes. Of course the Sarah Jane did not remain locked up in the sheltered harbor of the Polar Basin. Had she done so, it is not possible that her chronicler should have been able to gather his notes for the preceding pages, which were communicated to him by Captain Jonathan Macy of Nantucket, this very summer.

Yes; the Sarah Jane escaped, but not that year. They found the ice so far advanced when they emerged from Giants' Pass in September, that it was nearly impossible to penetrate to the south that year. They were compelled to return to Northland and make up their minds to stay for the winter, encouraged by the fact that the Norsemen now not only received them as friends but were anxious to retain them as instructors in the arts of peace.

They had the wonderful sight presented to them of the sudden change from day to night, which took place a few days after the autumnal equinox, when the sun sunk behind Monte Katrina, to return no more till March.

For another month they could trace his course behind the mountains by the glow of twilight, which moved in a grand circle round their tops; but after that, all was darkness and starlight, only relieved by the brilliant displays of the Northern Lights.

But the winter was by no means an idle one. Though the air at times was cold, the sea never froze, and the lurid fires of that circle of volcanoes which fringed the Polar Sea both lighted and warmed them. The castles were full of feasters for the wedding of King Olaf, which took place with great splendor; and the wild Norsemen seemed to vie which should be foremost to drown the memories of war and death in feasting and rejoicing.

The only mourners were the women of Hakon's Island, and even they proved swift to be consoled by

their conquerors, who were, after all, brother Norsemen.

The winter went on, and long before the sun made its new appearance to stay, the keels of several vessels, modeled after the Sarah Jane, had been laid, while the islanders were learning how to cast guns and make gunpowder from the stores around them.

The Norsemen were always skillful miners and workers in iron, and the volcanic neighborhood supplied them with ample stores of mineral riches, which they were quick to profit by.

When the sun returned at last after a month of gradually increasing twilight, it shone on a busy and contented people, who seemed to have abandoned war and to have turned their restless energies to work, stimulated by the example of the Americans.

Then, at last, when the perpendicular rays of the sun gave warning that midsummer was near at hand, the Sarah Jane, loaded with precious furs and all sorts of Norse merchandise, sailed out of the Giants' Pass and left the Polar Sea forever.

To tell of their journey to the South would be but a repetition of their previous experience. They were assisted as before, by one of those subterranean convulsions which seemed to be periodic in the Northland, and under which the crust of the earth by Humboldt's Glacier sunk to its former level, while the sudden rush of the sea wave opened the ice in Smith's Sound to such an extent that it became a practicable channel.

They then saw that what Hayes had imagined to be the permanent open entrance to a Polar Sea was only a temporary disturbance, due to volcanic convulsions, which recur at irregular intervals in the Polar Region. They had the luck to be there in time to take advantage of the opening, and they were swift to avail themselves of it; passing the North Water and Melville Bay in safety and reaching Omenak's Fjord in September.

From thence home their voyage was uneventful, and they arrived at Nantucket in October of last year, where the writer had the pleasure of meeting the whole family.

Reuben has gone back to Harvard, and it is arranged that when he graduates he is to go into business in Boston and to marry pretty Kitty Macy, who has dropped all her hoydenish ways and is quite quiet and sedate.

Captain Macy goes to the North no more, being now in command of a Liverpool "liner" of twelve hundred tons, with young Jonathan for first mate. Mrs. Macy goes with him, for she says that she will never leave him again to go to sea and he admits she is right.

As for Uncle Jabez, he cultivates his cabbages at Nantucket till he moves to Boston with Reuben, and frequently tells long yarns about his last voyage to the Pole.

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